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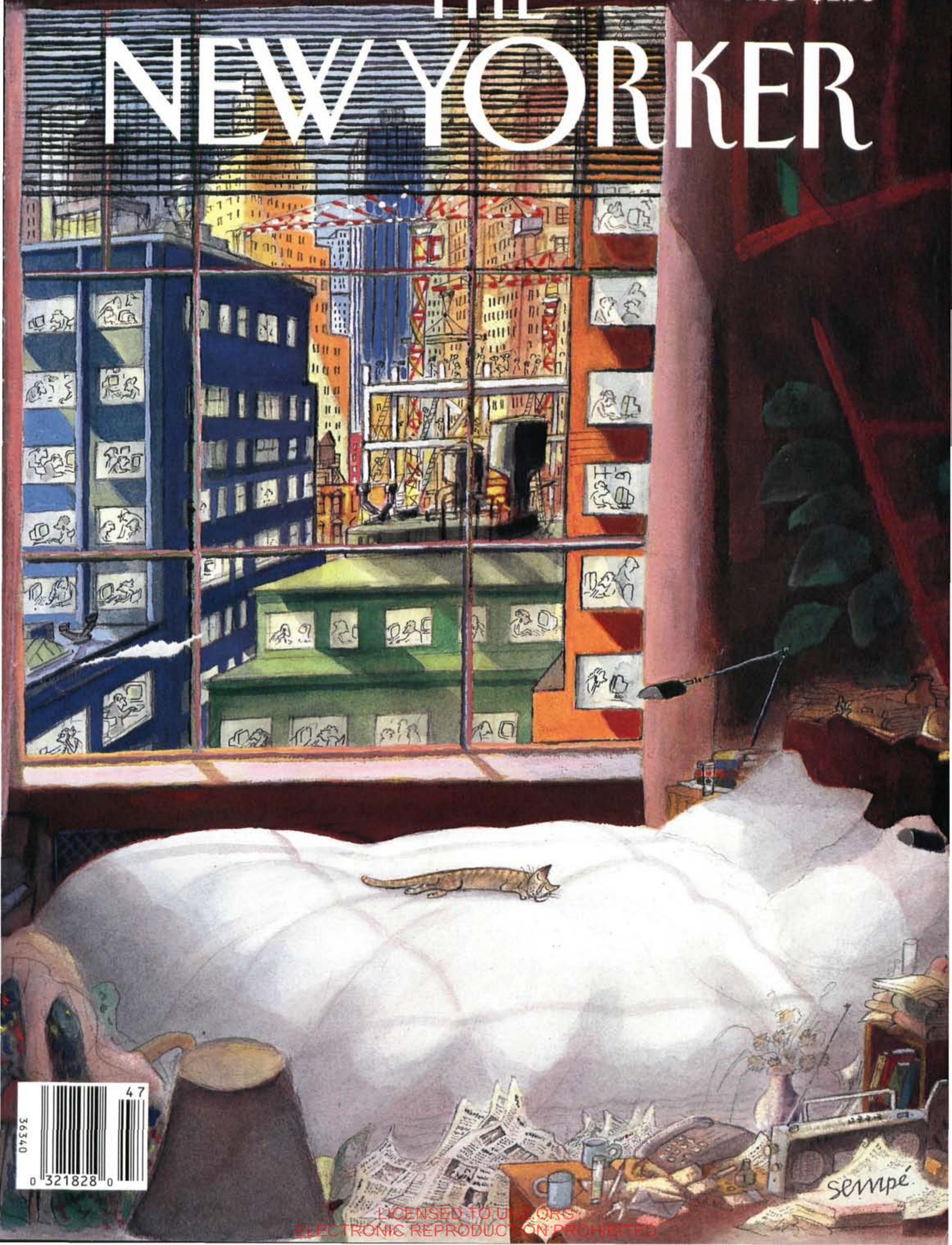

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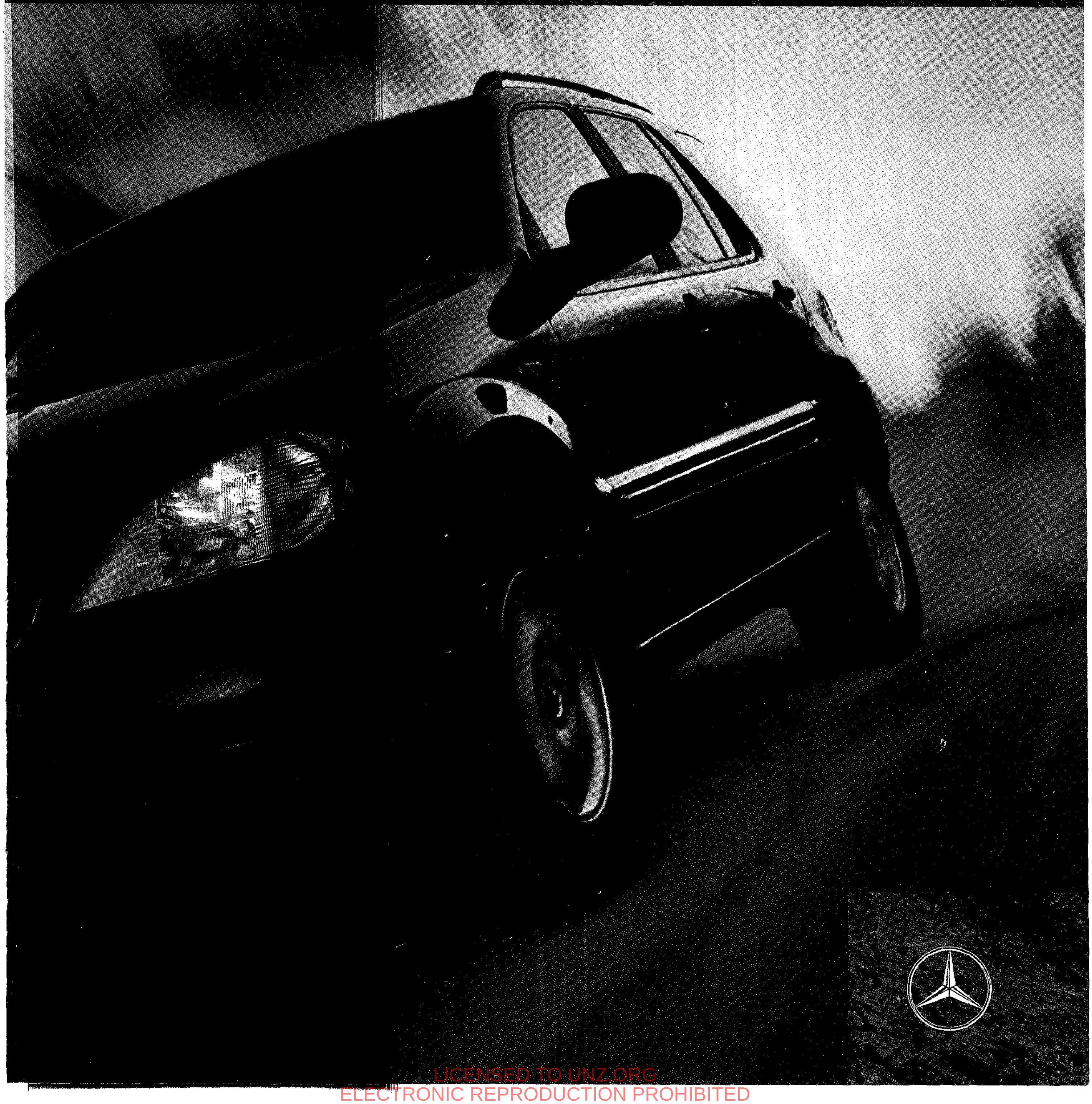

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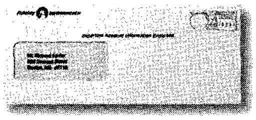

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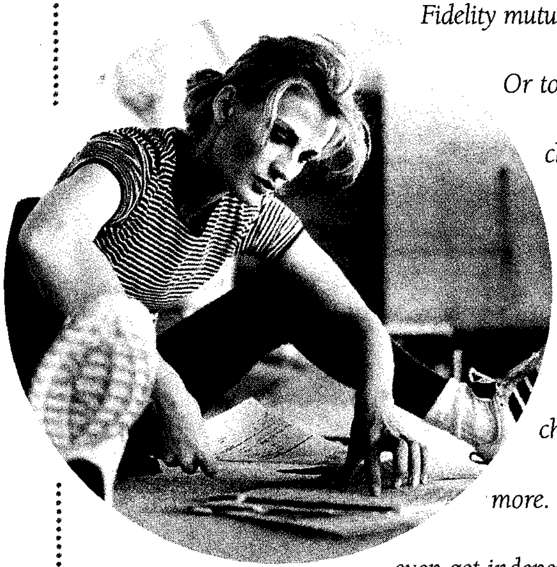

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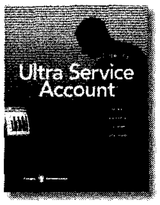

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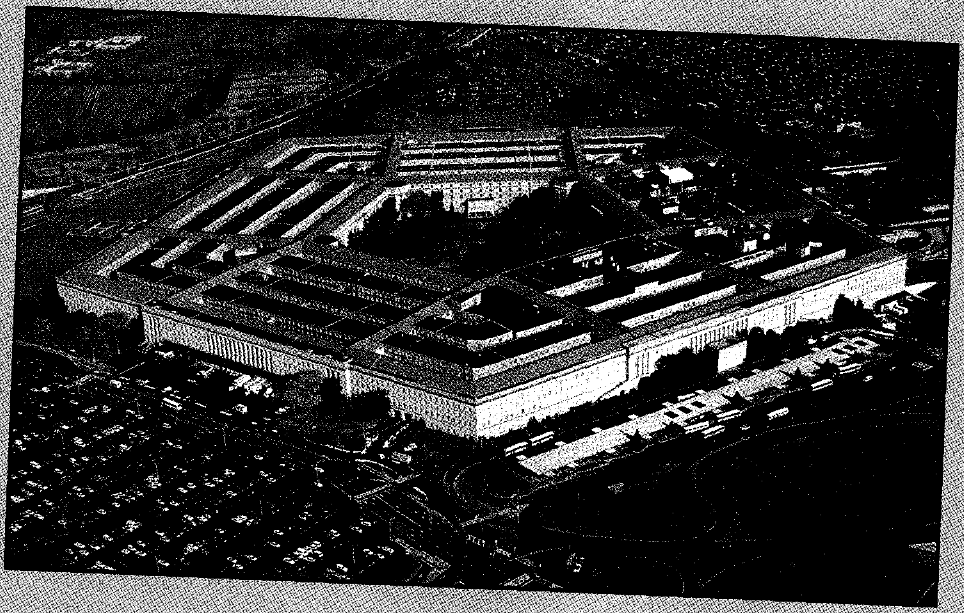

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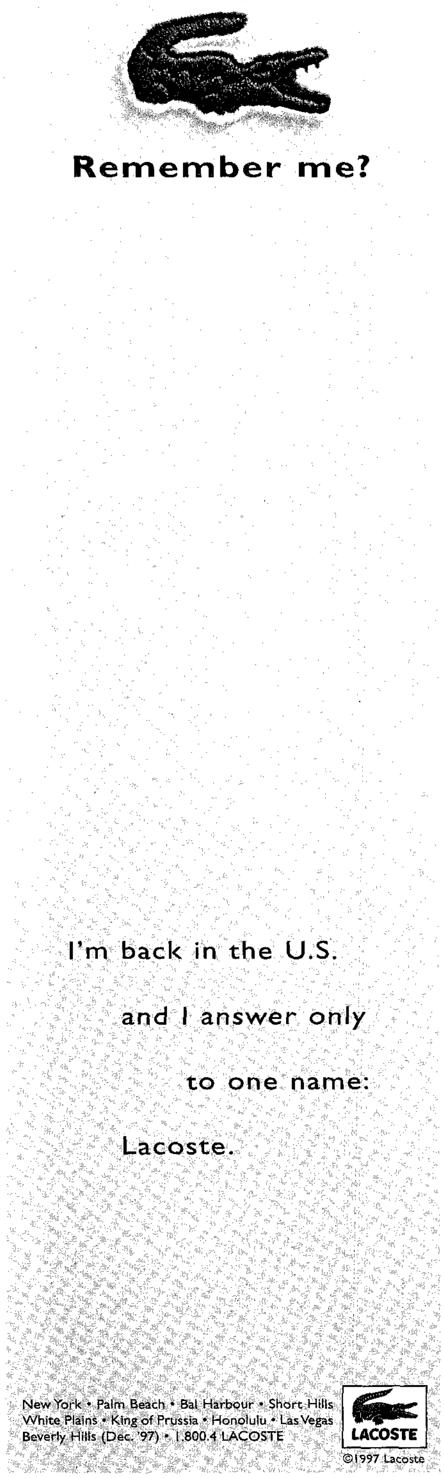
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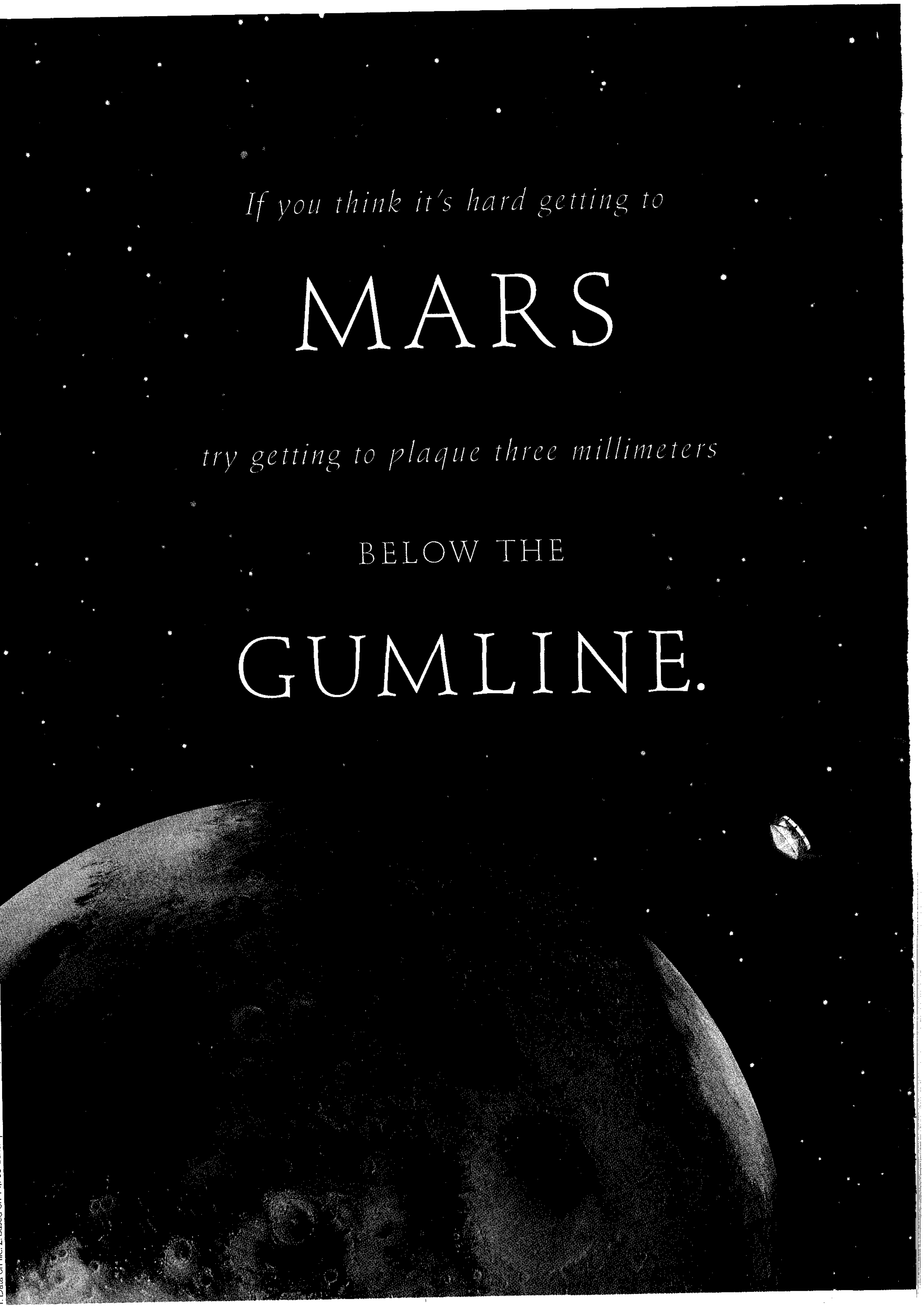
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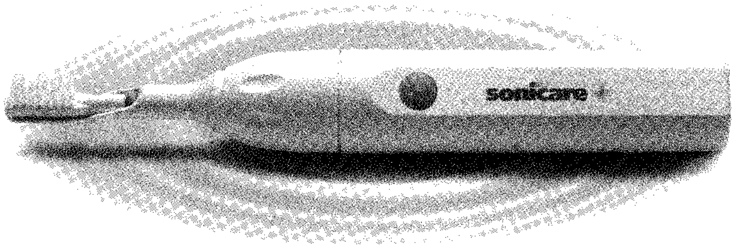

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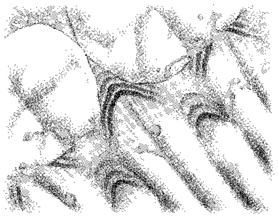

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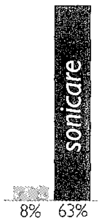

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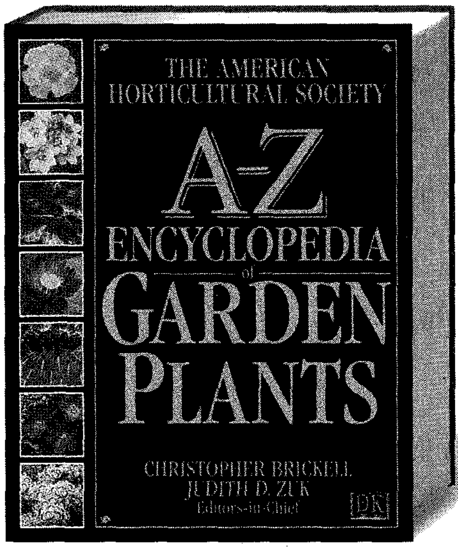
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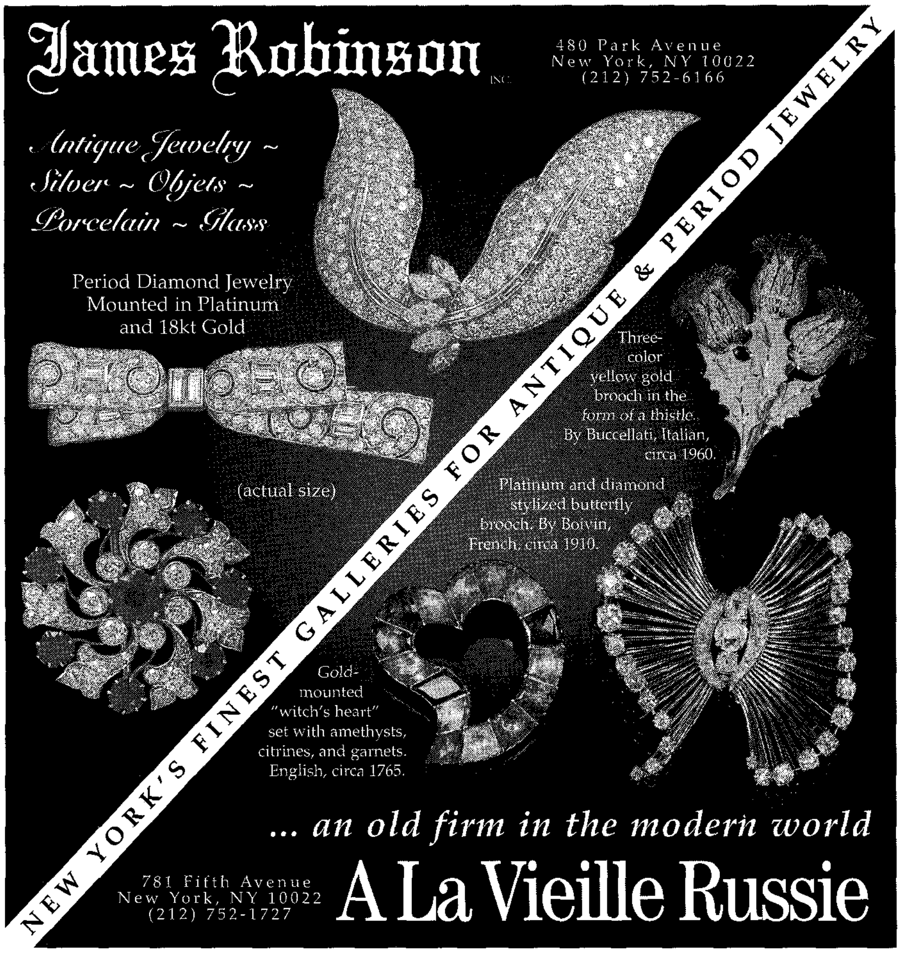
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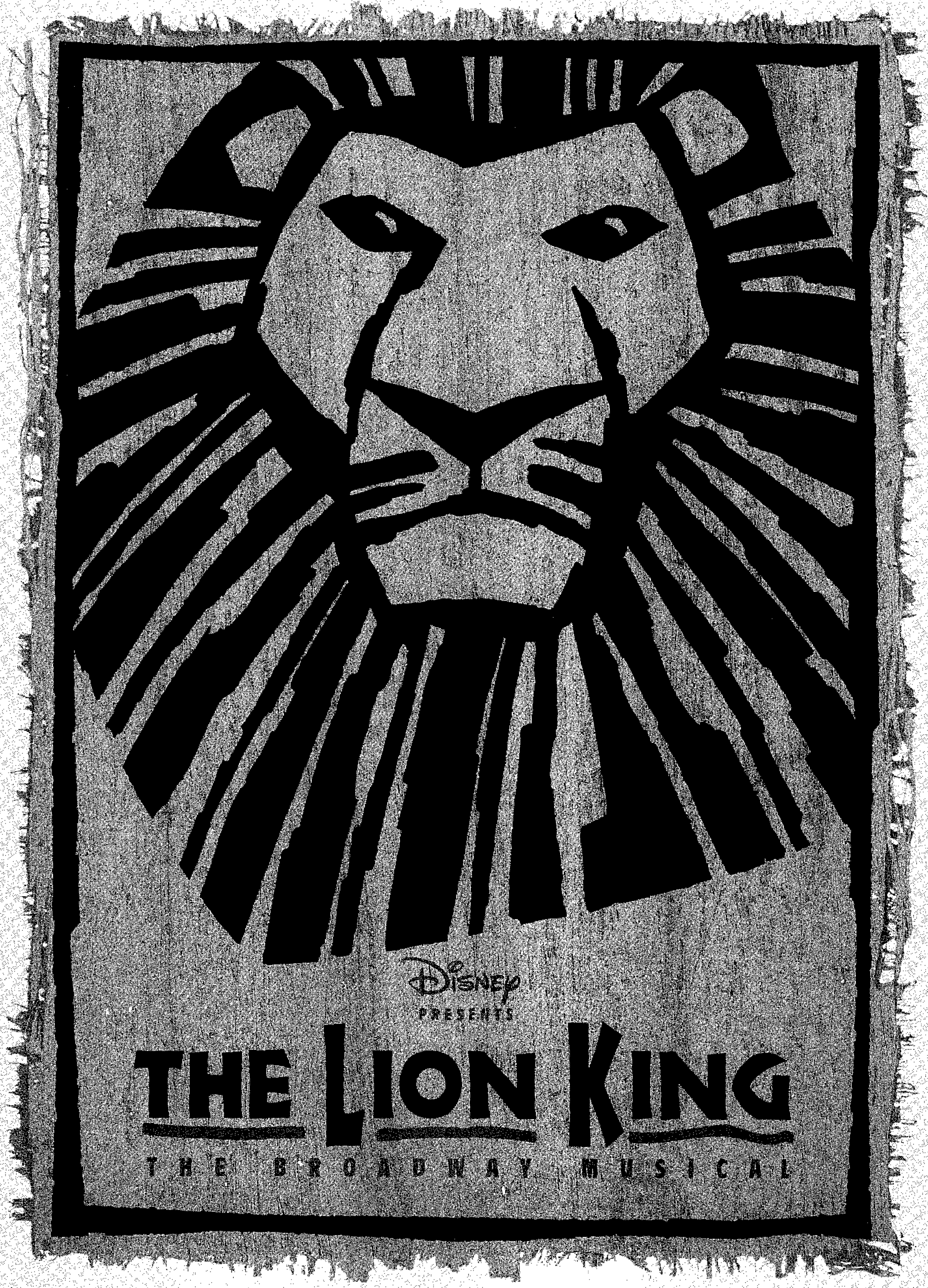
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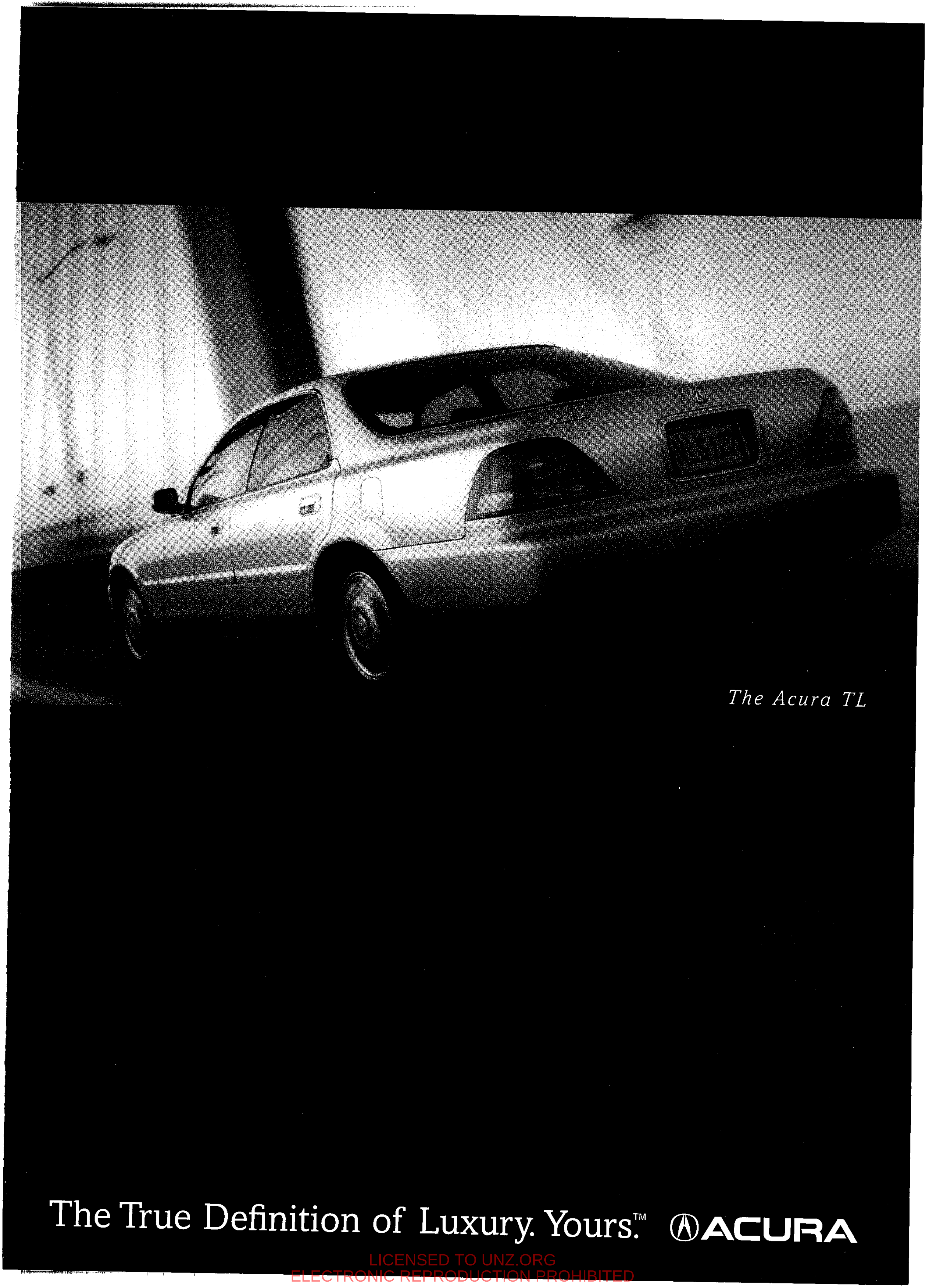
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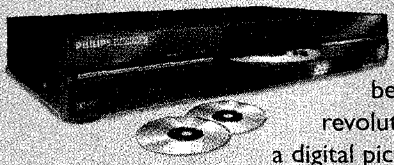

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COMMENT

BEYOND BOMBS

Targeting Saddam Hussein's real weakness.

THE Cable News Network has sent two of its star correspondents to Baghdad and is said to be shopping for a rooftop there. Apparently, CNN thinks that the United States is serious about confronting Saddam Hussein, who seems bent on breaking his promise to dismantle the chemical-, biological-, and nuclear-warfare capability of his regime. Or perhaps it is only CNN that is serious.

Last Wednesday, the United Nations Security Council unanimously condemned Iraq and imposed a ban on international travel by Iraqi officials. This new sanction has the virtue of punishing the Iraqi government directly, rather than imposing hardship on Iraq's people. But it's a pinprick. It exempts "persons carrying out bona fide diplomatic assignments," and, anyway, Saddam Hussein had already taken the precaution of stocking his embassies with extra "diplomats," most of them intelligence agents.

The Security Council's resolution made no mention of the use of force, because three of the Council's five permanent members—Russia, China, and France—balked. Instead, it spoke vaguely of "serious consequences" and "further measures." The United States and Britain maintain that under earlier U.N. resolutions they are already authorized to use force. But, even if President Clinton goes ahead and orders the bombs to fall, there is virtually no chance that Saddam Hussein and his disgusting regime will be blown away by them.

Whatever the outcome of the immediate crisis, the world community will remain badly in need of imaginative ways to keep the pressure on Saddam and, ultimately, to help bring about his fall. One promising approach would be to indict him and his henchmen for war crimes. The ten-month-old International Campaign to Indict Iraqi War Criminals—known to Web-crawling thug hunters as Indict.Org—has won support in London from Prime Minister Blair and in Washington from the House International Relations Committee. "If Saddam is indicted by an international court," the exiled Iraqi opposition leader Ahmad Chalabi said last week, "nobody in the Arab world or outside it will deal with him. He will be an outcast."

A second approach would be to do more—much more—to encourage the inchoate opposition to Saddam inside Iraq. Baghdad today is like Moscow under Brezhnev, and visitors are wise to behave accordingly: remember the listening devices, speak frankly only in

---

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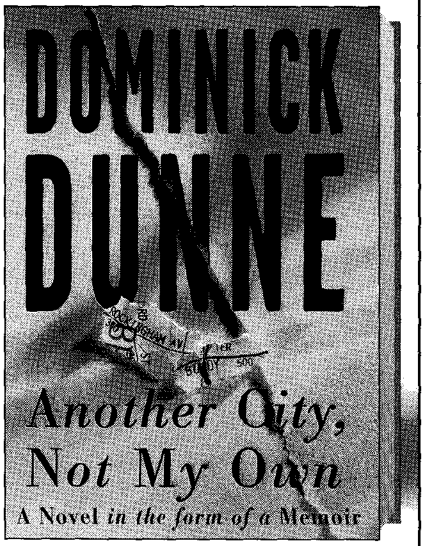

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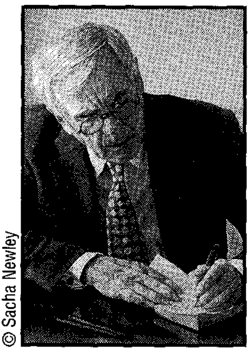

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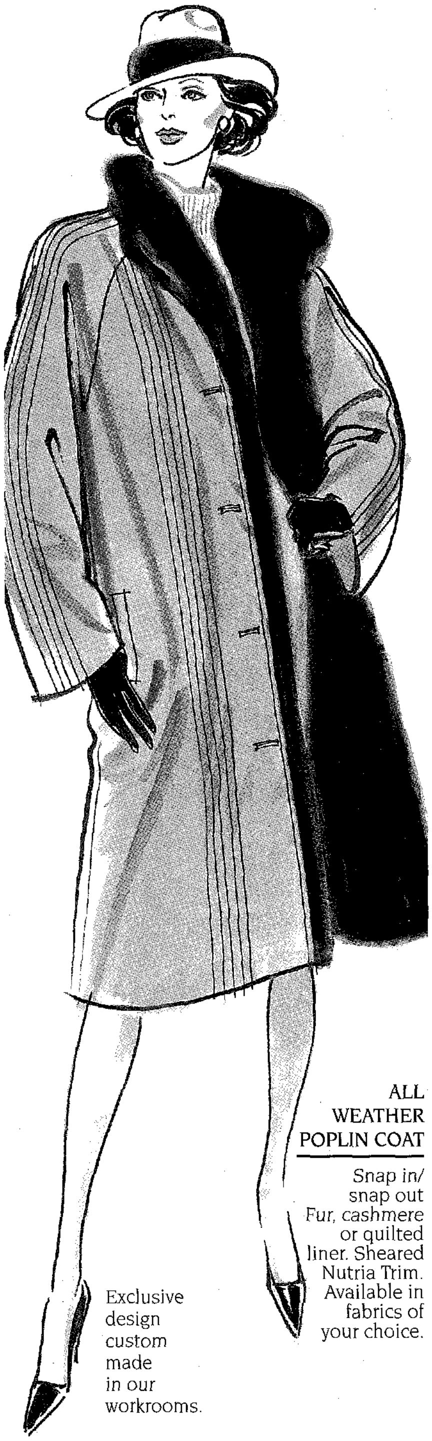

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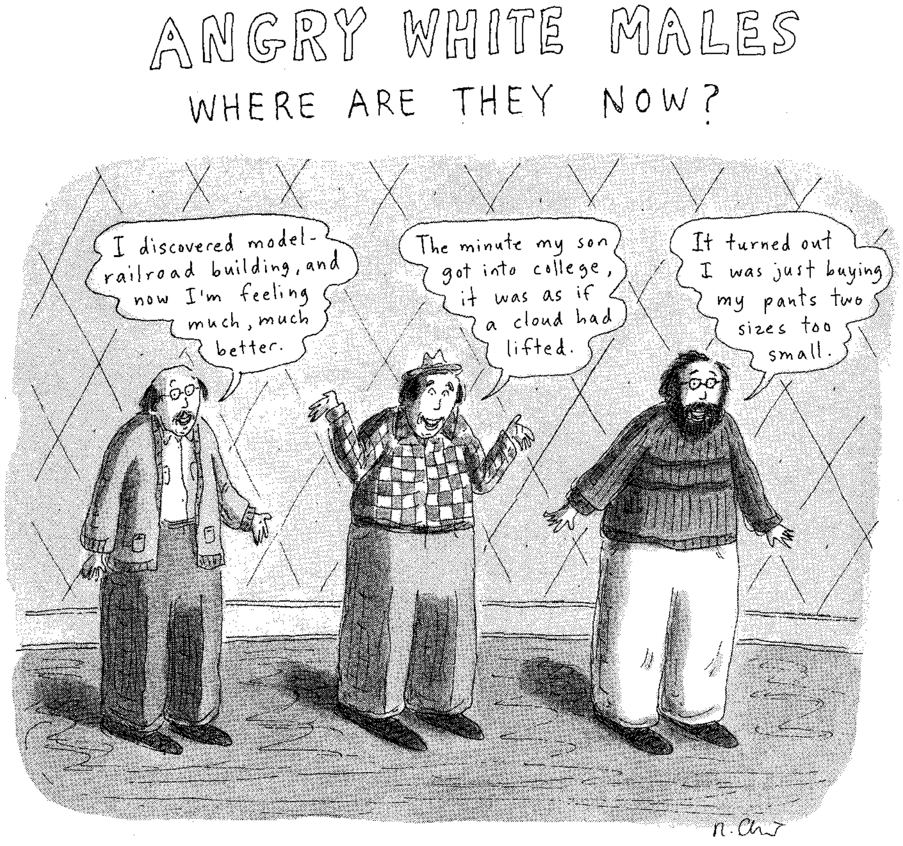
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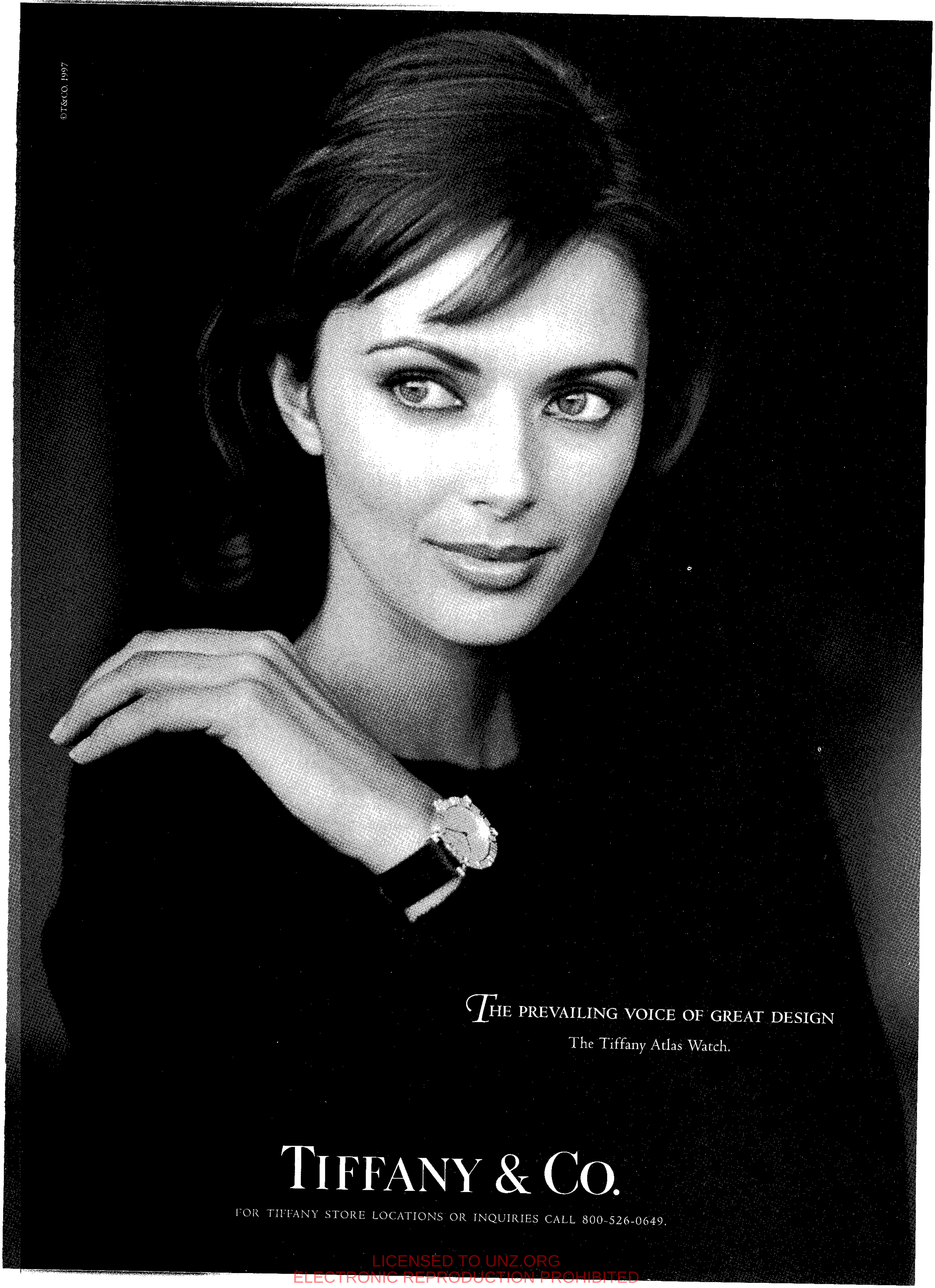
R. Chast

• •

open spaces, change taxis, check for a tail before entering a private home, use no names on the phone, and never make appointments from the hotel. With caution and persistence, an outsider can overcome Iraqis' initial fear sufficiently to learn that there is more dissent than meets the eye of a CNN camera (or of a foreign journalist accompanied by a "minder" from the Ministry of Information). The élites and the intelligentsia know exactly who is to blame for the hell their country has become. The anger of the masses is equally real, yet it tends to be directed not against Saddam Hussein but against the outside world.

Building popular opposition to Saddam Hussein requires breaking the totalitarian blockade of information in Iraq. The Iraqi National Congress, of which Mr. Chalabi is president, is trying valiantly to do just that. The I.N.C.'s radio station, Al Huriya (Freedom), used to beam fourteen hours of programming a day to the whole of Iraq from transmitters situated in Kuwait and paid for by the Central Intelligence Agency. The broadcasts, prepared in London and in the part of northern Iraq that is beyond the control of the regime, offered uncensored news and rebutted Baghdad's propaganda. In March of 1996, however, the funding was cut off—because, according to the authoritative *Jane's Intelligence Review*, the C.I.A. had decided to bet all its chips on trying to foment a military coup—and a few months later the station fell silent. The I.N.C. still publishes a weekly newspaper, but it is running out of resources and may soon be reduced to its Web site (http://www.inc.org.uk), whose effect inside Iraq is minimal.

A new and relatively modest injection of cash would put Al Huriya back on the air. That would enable Iraqis to learn, for example, that Saddam's son Uday has been enriching himself by selling medical supplies intended for the relief of Iraqi civilians, or that the poor Iraqi families who have "spontaneously" camped in Saddam's palaces to serve as human shields are sleeping on marble bought with funds diverted from hospitals. To be sure, a step like this shouldn't preclude a firm response to Iraq's expulsion of the Americans working in the U.N.'s arms-inspection mission. Yet simply reacting to provocation isn't enough. From Minsk and Managua to Port-au-Prince and Pale, the history of the past decade suggests that truth is tyranny's ultimate vulnerability. Saddam Hussein may be a particularly hard case, but, in the end, even he will not be immune. —ANNA HUSARSKA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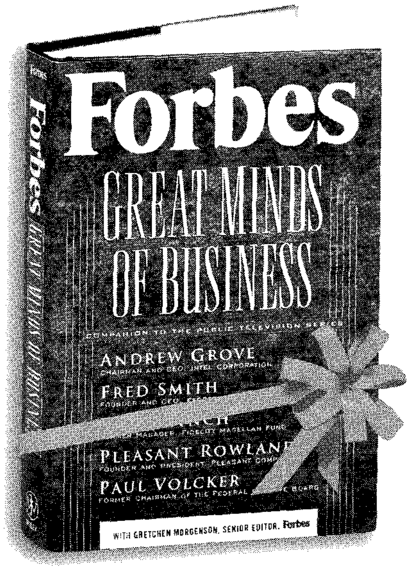
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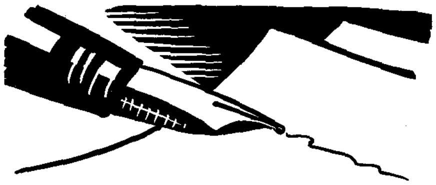

THE NEXT ISSUES

The notion of "domestic out-sourcing" that Margaret Talbot described in "Dial-a-Wife" (October 20th & 27th) is revolting. Few people seem willing to question what has led us to such silliness as hiring household "consultants" or paying a stranger to send care packages to our kids at camp: namely, the career, and the clichéd values—being the best, having it all—that fuel its pursuit. It has been said that we can make either the life or the work, and, while I am all in favor of doing a creditable job on the job, as one who chose to become a father only one of those options seemed possible. Shaping one's children into the best people one possibly can rates a far higher priority than climbing to the top of any career ladder. Cut back on the overweening ambition a bit (maybe even give up the tennis and the squash) and you'll find that both fitting in "quality time" with the kids and fixing supper will be possible. The four-year-old can even help with the cooking.

E. H. BEARDSLEY
Columbia, S.C.

As a professor of communications research, I have taught both at a "drive-thru U." (similar to the one James Traub described in The Next University, October 20th & 27th) and at a traditional university. Contrary to claims made by proponents of the former, at our traditional school we do offer our students a practical education. In fact, we insist that they get one. The difference it makes is that our students not only can speak up in meetings but will actually have something to say.

KATHRYN SMOOT EGAN
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah

John Cassidy's article points out Karl Marx's many insights into the nature of present-day capitalism ("The Return of Karl Marx," October 20th & 27th) but doesn't mention the notion of dialectical praxis—a notion that in some ways predicts the unworkability of the totalitarian Communist state as it was implemented by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Praxis, Marx wrote, is the interaction between theory and practice: if a policy predicted by theory does not work in the real world, one should adjust the theory accordingly and move on. Lenin and his Party, on the other hand, applied policies based expressly on their narrow vision of the world, and when their theory flopped they adjusted history to tell the story they wanted it to and eliminated anyone who protested. Such acts are a far cry from Marx's basic concern of freeing men from alienation, and he would doubtless approve of the failure of such regimes.

BRIAN H. CORCORAN
Washington, D.C.

Not only was Marx wrong about Communism; he was wrong about the evolution of capitalism. Although the gap in income inequality may have widened since the eighteen-hundreds, few can deny that even the poorest fifty per cent of today's families are considerably better off than their nineteenth-century counterparts. The rich may be richer, but so are the poor.

ALBERTO M. RAMOS
Washington, D.C.

After reading John Seabrook's thoughts on the pervasiveness of marketing in the development of cultural content ("The Big Sellout," October 20th & 27th), I looked back at the table of contents and considered the questions raised: How will President Clinton market himself after his term ends? How has Missy Elliott marketed herself? Is there a market for pet snakes, hydrogen-powered cars, smart shoes, or Elizabeth Dole? Indeed, it seems that marketing may be the dominant paradigm of more than popular culture—it may be the next dominant paradigm of everything.

ED PETKUS, JR.
Boise, Idaho

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

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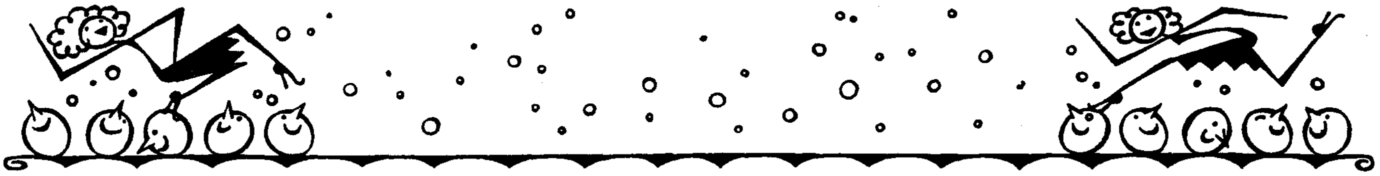

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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23	24	25	19	20	21	22

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Bashevis: Tales of I. B. Singer—David Margulies stars in an evening of three of the author's short stories adapted for the stage. In previews. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 354-2220.)

Brides of the Moon—Four spacewomen and a monkey get stranded on Uranus in this sci-fi comedy by the Five Lesbian Brothers. In previews. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

Clue: The Musical—The board game hits the boards. Denny Dillon stars as the detective. In previews. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 239-6200.)

Cyrano de Bergerac—Frank Langella directs, and dons the schnozz in, his own adaptation of Rostand's romantic drama, from a translation by Brian Hooker. In previews. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Hallow'd Ground—A one-man show about Abe Lincoln, starring Richard Bourg and directed by Gene Frankel. In previews through Nov. 23. Opens Nov. 24 at 8. (Gene Frankel Theatre, 24 Bond St. 279-4200.)

Ivanov—Kevin Kline stars in David Hare's adaptation of Chekhov's 1887 drama, in a staging directed by Gerald Gutierrez. Two previews on Nov. 19. Opens Nov. 20 at 6:45. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Light Up the Sky—The second offering in the New-York Historical Society's series of plays about the theatre is this 1948 comedy by Moss Hart. Nov. 23 at 3 and Nov. 24 at 7:30. (2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. 873-3400.)

Major Barbara—Melissa Errico and Boyd Gaines star in an Irish Repertory Theatre staging of George Bernard Shaw's 1905 play. Tony Walton is the director. In previews through Nov. 23. Opens Nov. 24 at 7. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

The Mother—The Irondale Ensemble Project takes on Brecht's 1932 play about a Russian widow who becomes a revolutionary. In previews. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 633-1292.)

The Old Neighborhood—A trilogy of one-acts by David Mamet, with Peter Riegert, Patti LuPone, Vincent Guastaferro, Rebecca Pidgeon, and Jack Willis. Opens Nov. 19 at 7:15. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Pride's Crossing—A ninety-year-old woman who once swam the English Channel (Cherry Jones) relives the stages of her life, in Tina Howe's new play, directed by Jack O'Brien. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Street Corner Symphony—A revue of music and dance from the sixties and seventies, directed by Marion J. Caffey. In previews through Nov. 23. Opens Nov. 24 at 6:45. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

OPENED RECENTLY

The Adjustment—The Jewish Repertory Theatre presents a romantic comedy by Michael Folie. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes Nov. 23.)

Alligator Tales—Anne Galjour, the author of and sole performer in this ambitious play about a group of eight folks in South Louisiana, is a talented storyteller, who shows real compassion for her characters and makes some good points about the reality of life in the often romanticized Cajun country. Unfortunately, the procession of natural disasters which provides the work's narrative glue eventually grows tiresome. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Always . . . Patsy Cline—Not quite a revue, not quite a play, this spirited and Nashville-slick celebration of the late, great country singer is, rather, a streamlined song-delivery device. Tori Lynn Palazola doesn't sound exactly like Patsy, but she's good at doing Patsy. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 7.)

The Batting Cage—A comedy by Joan Ackermann. Lisa Peterson is the director. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes Dec. 7.)

Tony Kushner's "A Dybbuk," at the Public.

JULIA LICHT

As Bees in Honey Drown—J. Smith-Cameron is hilarious as a flimflam woman, in Douglas Carter Beane's comic indictment of America's obsession with fame; the script's satirical power sours only when, every once in a while, it takes itself too seriously. Mark Brokaw directed. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

The Ballad of Yachiyo—Philip Kan Gotanda's new play, based on his aunt's life, is the tale of seventeen-year-old Yachiyo, the daughter of Japanese immigrants in Hawaii, who is sent away from home and boyfriend to learn the tea ceremony; she falls in love with a married man and comes to a bad end. The script tends toward melodrama, but touching scenes—between Yachiyo and her father, between lovers who don't love each other any more—and incisive performances take it beyond simple-minded entertainment. Sala Iwamatsu is strong as Yachiyo, and Sab Shimono, always a welcome presence, has a sweet dignity as her father. Bruce Schwartz's puppets and Loy Arcenas's set add to the seductiveness of the evening. Deftly directed by Sharon Ott. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Dec. 7.)

Brutality of Fact—In Keith Reddin's play, the American family is indeed an institution: a low-security insane asylum. One sister has a drinking problem she's not exactly wrestling with. The other has become a zealous Jehovah's Witness; her widowed mother, who reluctantly lives with her, calls their home Rancho Jesus. The writing calls Nicky Silver's plays to mind, but here the comedy is bittersweet rather than acidly biting—it's a melanchomedy. The cast includes Scotty Bloch, Ken Marks, Rebecca Nelson, and Leslie Lyles, who is brilliantly funny as the dipsomaniacal sister. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes Nov. 23.)

Defying Gravity—Jane Anderson has based her new drama on the disastrous launching, in 1986, of the space shuttle Challenger. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

A Dybbuk; or, Between Two Worlds—Tony Kushner's adaptation of S. Ansky's 1920 play, based on the Yiddish folk tale about predestination and the paths to God, doesn't have as much of Kushner's powerful, playful language as you might expect (and eventually all the nods to the Holocaust become heavy-handed). However, Brian Kulick's strong-minded direction, together with Naomi Goldberg's evocative choreography and a clever set by Mark Wendland, give the evening a vital force that makes the rabbi's late declaration about God—"No matter how few [of us] there are, tell Him we will find Him. To deliver our complaints"—a truly stirring reaffirmation of the strength of faith in the face of disaster. Terrific original music by the Klezmatics. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Nov. 30.)

Filumena—Maria Tucci co-stars with Tony Amendola in her own adaptation of Eduardo DeFilippo's 1946 romantic comedy. A Blue Light Theatre Company production, directed by James Naughton. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 7.)

Flight—The Ensemble Studio Theatre presents a play by Arthur Giron, about Wilbur and Orville Wright. Jamie Richards is the director. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-4982. Closes Nov. 30.)

Fly—Joseph Edward turns in a powerhouse performance in his own play. It's billed as an exploration of black men's lives in America, but at its most affecting—comically and tragically—it's also the beautifully crafted tale of *one* black man's life in America. The title character has had neither the best of luck nor the worst, but he feels the world pressing in around him, and he thinks he's found an escape. Mr. Edward has created a remarkably wide range of believable characters beyond Fly, and Arthur French and Amy-Monique Waddell—who play them all—turn

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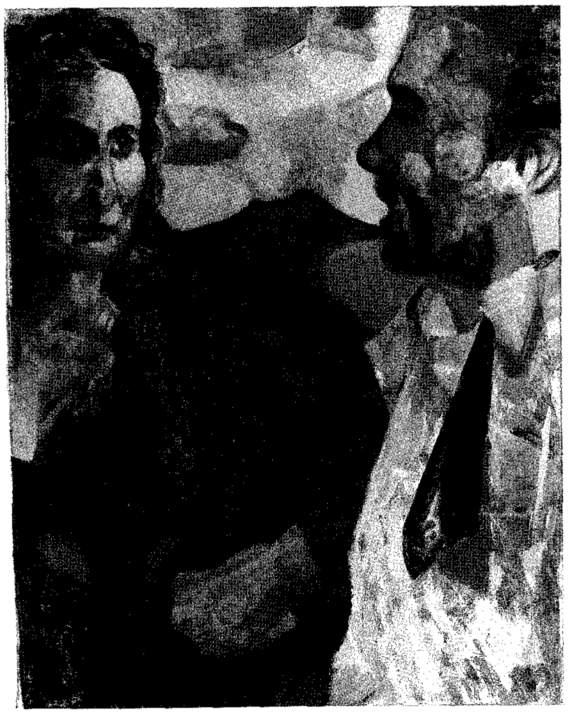

Maria Tucci and Tony Amendola, in "Filumena."

RICCARDO VECCHIO

in performances equal in range and power to the playwright's. The drama doesn't pretend to have all the answers: it's simply a thought-provoking explication of the questions, and one that—unusually, these days—doesn't use its humor to diffuse its pain. Directed by Wynn Handman. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

The Forest—Aleksandr Ostrovsky's 1871 play pulls out just about every cliché available, and yet, in this Pearl Theatre Company production directed by Shepard Sobel, it's still fun (if a bit long). The principal source of pleasure is Richard Thompson, who turns in a performance worthy of Garrick while remaining charmingly aware of how overwrought such acting seems to modern audiences. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes Nov. 30.)

Forever Tango—This stepchild of Vegas and Buenos Aires, created and directed by Luis Bravo, gets everything right. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Frida K.—A one-woman show about the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo, written by Gloria Montero and starring Allegra Fulton. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker Street. 334-0962. Closes Nov. 30.)

H. Finn, Esq.—An attorney and a flimflam man take a trip up the Mississippi together, in a drama by Peter Zablotsky. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!—Sandra Bernhard brings her new performance piece to the Westbeth Theatre Center. (151 Bank St. 307-7171. Closes Nov. 29.)

The Irish . . . and How They Got That Way—A good-natured if somewhat choppy revue by Frank McCourt, author of the best-selling memoir "Angela's Ashes," performed by a versatile and charming cast of six singers and musicians. Deftly directed by Charlotte Moore. The show, an Irish Repertory Theatre production, reopens at the Chelsea Playhouse on Nov. 20. (125 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Jackie—Margaret Colin portrays Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, in Gip Hoppe's comedy, which satirizes public perceptions of events in the title character's life. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Lion King—Disney's Broadway version of its animated film, directed by Julie Taymor. (Reviewed in this issue.) (New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

Long Day's Journey Into Night—A National Asian American Theatre Company revival of O'Neill's domestic tragedy. (Mint, 311 W. 43rd St. 505-3003. Closes Nov. 23.)

A Madhouse in Goa—Judith Ivey leads the cast in a drama of intrigue by Martin Sherman ("Bent"), which takes place over two decades on two Greek islands. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 787-3392.)

Marc Salem's Mindgames—The mind reader takes volunteers from the audience in his show of telepathic feats. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

Menopausal Gentleman—Peggy Shaw's new one-woman show. Thursdays through Saturdays, through Nov. 22. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088.)

Mojo—The rock-and-roll scene in London in 1958 is the setting for the British playwright Jez Butterworth's comedy. Neil Pepe is the director. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242. Closes Dec. 7.)

Proposals—In Neil Simon's new comedy, directed by Joe Mantello, a family reunites at its vacation home in the Poconos. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Scarlet Pimpernel—This new musical, based on the Baroness Orczy novel, has a lot going for it if you don't count its music and lyrics, which are dreadful and appalling, respectively. Its charismatic star, Douglas Sills, is new to Broadway yet possesses the brio of a Stewart Granger and a good voice to boot; Christine Andreas, who plays his wife, overdoes her vibrato but still sounds lovely. The one human fly in the ointment is Terrence Mann, who, as the villain of the piece, seems intent on proving that he can play a bad guy in his sleep. Andrew Jackness's sets are top-drawer, and Jane Greenwood's costumes are sensational. Nan Knighton, who committed the crime of the lyrics, also wrote the book, which is quite good. Frank Wildhorn, of "Jekyll & Hyde" fame, wrote the music. Peter Hunt directed. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know—A comic revue inspired by the Fodor's handbook of the same title. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

Side Show—A promising premise for a musical—the story of Violet and Daisy Hilton, Siamese twins who grew up in the world of carnivals and became a vaudeville act in the thirties—flattened by bombastic shlock rock, an unimaginative set, and a book that reduces the sisters' entire existence to a pulp-romance plot. Nevertheless, most of the actors manage to carry themselves with dignity. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/3/97) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Sketches on Morning, Noon & Night—Spalding Gray presents his latest monologue, a work in progress. Mondays, through Dec. 22. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Tell-Tale—Theatre Couture's comic thriller puts a drag spin on Edgar Allan Poe. Sherry Vine and Jackie Beat are the stars. (Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

Thérèse Raquin—The Classic Stage Company opens its thirtieth season with Neal Bell's adaptation of Zola's 1867 novel, starring Elizabeth Marvel in the title role. David Esbjornson is the director. (136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Nov. 23.)

Three Days of Rain—There's a deeply felt, unutterable sadness at the core of Richard Greenberg's play, in which three no longer young people try to sort out the legacy, financial and emotional, left to them by their parents. John Slattery, as gaunt and graceful as a ghost, gives an astonishingly moving performance as an articulate and ironic lost soul; Patricia Clarkson is good as his more stable sister; and Bradley Whitford is terrific as his oldest friend. In the second act, the three actors play these characters' parents; what we find is how little we can ever know of the past. Every element of this production, which was directed by Evan Yionoulis, rings true, right down to Chris Barreca's set, a SoHo loft that's so forlorn it practically moans. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

TIME ROCKER—Lou Reed, Robert Wilson, and Darryl Pinckney's pop opera. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Closes Nov. 23.)

TRIUMPH OF LOVE—A musical adaptation of the 1732 Marivaux farce which brims with intelligence, feeling, musicality, and wit. The characters are more or less stock types, but the actors, led by Betty Buckley and F. Murray Abraham, as a self-deluded sister and brother, bring them to full ripeness. Michael Mayer directed. (11/3/97) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

TWO PIANOS, FOUR HANDS—Canadian keyboardists Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt perform both classical and pop selections while recounting their years of musical training, in a comedy they co-wrote. Directed by Gloria Muzio. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

YOU ANC NOTHING YET—Pieter-Dirk Uys, a South African political satirist who performs in drag, brings his latest one-man show to the Brooklyn Academy of Music. (30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Closes Nov. 22.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE:** Century, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE KING AND I:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **LATE NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 279-4200. . . . **THE LIFE:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **MERE MORTALS:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200.

DANCE

"FREE RADICALS"—The sixteen-member Sydney Dance Company presents a full-length work whose percussion score—played on curtains, pipes, fishbowls, bodies, etc.—was composed in the studio as the choreographer, Graeme Murphy, created the movement for his athletic troupe around—and occasionally with—the three musicians. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 18-21 and Nov. 25 at 8, Nov. 22 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 23 at 2 and 7:30. Through Nov. 30.)

"UNA NOCHE DE TANGO"—Milena Plebs and Miguel Angel Zotto, who previously appeared in New York in "Tango Argentino," return with their own company, Tango x 2, in a full-length work. This is not the American tango (in which the upper body and the head are allowed to move) but the purer Argentine style (with the torso still and the action all in the legs). "You are closer to the other person," she explains. "You feel the other person, and it is very intimate." Plebs ought to know: since she and Zotto met in "Tango Argentino," they have married, formed Tango x 2, and divorced, tangoing all the while. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Nov. 18-21 and Nov. 25 at 8, Nov. 22 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 23 at 3. Through Nov. 30.)

"DESCRIPTIONS WITHOUT PLACE"—After a decade of dancing with Trisha Brown, Minnesotan Wil Swanson returns to choreography with two new works for his eight-member company, the title piece and "To Walk Among These Stones." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Nov. 20-22 at 8 and Nov. 23 at 3.)

"I MOVE TO KEEP THINGS WHOLE"—As part of a series matching dance and the spoken word, the choreographer Yin Mei has created a suite of works to the verse of Mark Strand, a poet whose use of silence, Yin feels, suggests the return of movement to stillness in traditional Chinese dance. (Mulberry Street Theatre, 70 Mulberry St. 349-0438. Nov. 20-22 at 8.)

"HEART MERIDIANS"—Mary Seidman and Dancers augments its six members with twenty-nine performers of various ages, from seven to seventy, for the forty-minute title piece, inspired by the photography that Edward Steichen chose for "The Family of Man." "Reef" (1996) is also on the program. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Nov. 20-23 at 8:30.)

ST. PETERSBURG ICE BALLET—Thirty-four skaters perform "The Nutcracker," with choreography by Konstantin Rassadin, a former Kirov soloist. (Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 718-951-4500. Nov. 23 at 1 and 4:30.)

Pashmina carpet with pattern of lattice and flowers (detail), Northern India, Kashmir or Lahore, ca. 1650. Private collection

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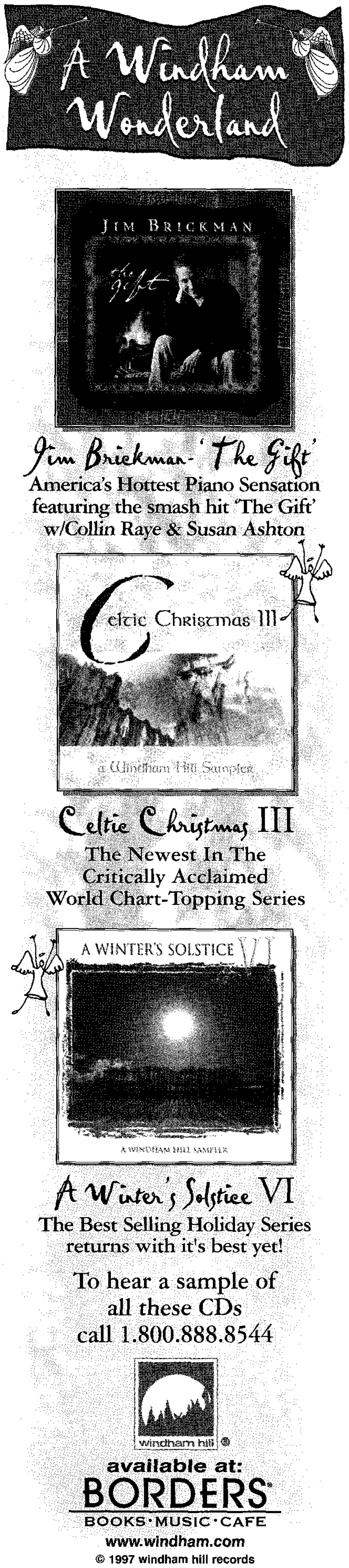
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NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Duran Duran—The original Europouters—older, wiser, and statuesquely hip—play music from their new album, "Medazzaland." (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Nov. 19 at 8.)

Gregg Allman and Friends—A real rambling man, this whiskey-voiced belter and considerable keyboardist is still a touring machine. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Nov. 19 at 8.)

Jessica Williams—Although this West Coaster is one of the most accomplished jazz pianists to have emerged since the seventies, she hasn't played in New York for fifteen years. This solo performance should illuminate her personal and comprehensive take on the tradition: James P. Johnson and Art Tatum share space in her heart with Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Nov. 19 at 8.)

311 / Sugar Ray—The hemp-friendly funk-and-punk combo from Omaha shares a bill with the passionately inane ska-and-punk combo out of Orange County. (Roseland. Nov. 21-22 at 7:30.)

Sonic Youth / Tom Verlaine—Can a band born from punk's ashes still be punk if it plays Lincoln Center? In the case of Sonic Youth, the answer is yes. Fifteen years after its inception, this New York quartet remains the Arkestra of its day, an arty group of insurrectionists masquerading as a rock band. Also on the bill is the celebrated former Television guitarist and front man, one of the first rockers to use dissonance and noise as coloring agents. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Nov. 21 at 8.)

Abbey Lincoln—The gutsy singer with the survivor spirit and the indeterminate pitch is celebrating a resurgence, and she struts a stage and slings out a song in a way that tells you this is the last comeback she ever intends to make. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Nov. 21 at 8.)

Cornershop, at Irving Plaza.

MARINA SAGONA

"The Rainforest Benefit"—Featuring Jackson Browne, Roseanne Cash, the Staple Singers, and others. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Nov. 20 at 8.)

Michael Blake and Free Association / Kevin Hays—The ambitious saxophonist and composer whose recent début, "Kingdom of Champa," was inspired by a trip to Vietnam brings in an ensemble manned by equally inventive players, including pianist Frank Kimbrough, drummer Matt Wilson, and horn player Peck Allmond. / The limber mainstream pianist performs with a trio. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Nov. 20 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

"The Wizard at 100: Sidney Bechet"—Two New Orleans homeboys—trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and clarinettist Dr. Michael White—celebrate one of that city's jazz giants. Bechet was a virtuoso soprano-saxophone and clarinet player with a larger-than-life sound and a battering sense of swing, who ran neck and neck with Louis Armstrong as an innovator. The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra has its work cut out for it—if you don't approach Bechet in an all-or-nothing spirit, you might as well stay home. Also on hand will be saxophonist, clarinettist, and musical scholar Bob Wilber, who has the distinct advantage of being the only surviving player to have studied with the Master. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Nov. 20 and Nov. 22 at 8.)

G. Love and Special Sauce—Three years ago, when Love, a handsome Philadelphia-born Elvis manqué, revivified chicken-shack blues with a hip-hop backbeat, he seemed like the funkiest white boy on earth. He and his band continue, on their third album, "Yeah, It's That Easy," to make some of the most interesting music around. (Roxy, 515 W. 18th St. 307-7171. Nov. 21 at 7.)

Victoria Williams—The kewpie-voiced modern folkie who continues to battle muscular dystrophy with her caustic songwriting and ameliorative presence. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 718-858-2424. Nov. 22 at 8.)

Sweet Honey in the Rock—The riveting all-female a-cappella quintet whose material embraces R. & B., jazz, and (of course) gospel. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 22 at 8.)

Radio Tarifa—The Andalusian world-music ensemble. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Nov. 22 at 8.)

KMFDM—Head-splitting industrial-strength techno noise. (Roseland. Nov. 24 at 7:30.)

Harry Connick, Jr.—The man who would be Sinatra is back doing what he does best: harmlessly smarmy ballads and ersatz show tunes. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 24 at 8.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Nov. 19: If you've followed the career of the brilliant saxophonist Joe Lovano, you also know who **judi silvano** is: this eager soprano pops up regularly on her husband's recordings and adds an unexpected tonal flavor. If she errs, it's on the side of experimentation. Lovano will be a featured soloist. Also on the bill are **james williams and the intensive care unit.** Williams's sweeping keyboard excursions, his soulful left-hand foundations, and his classic bebop lines wash over you like a warm summer shower, and his increasingly seasoned band rains gospel joy.

PREVIEWS BEGIN DEC. 1

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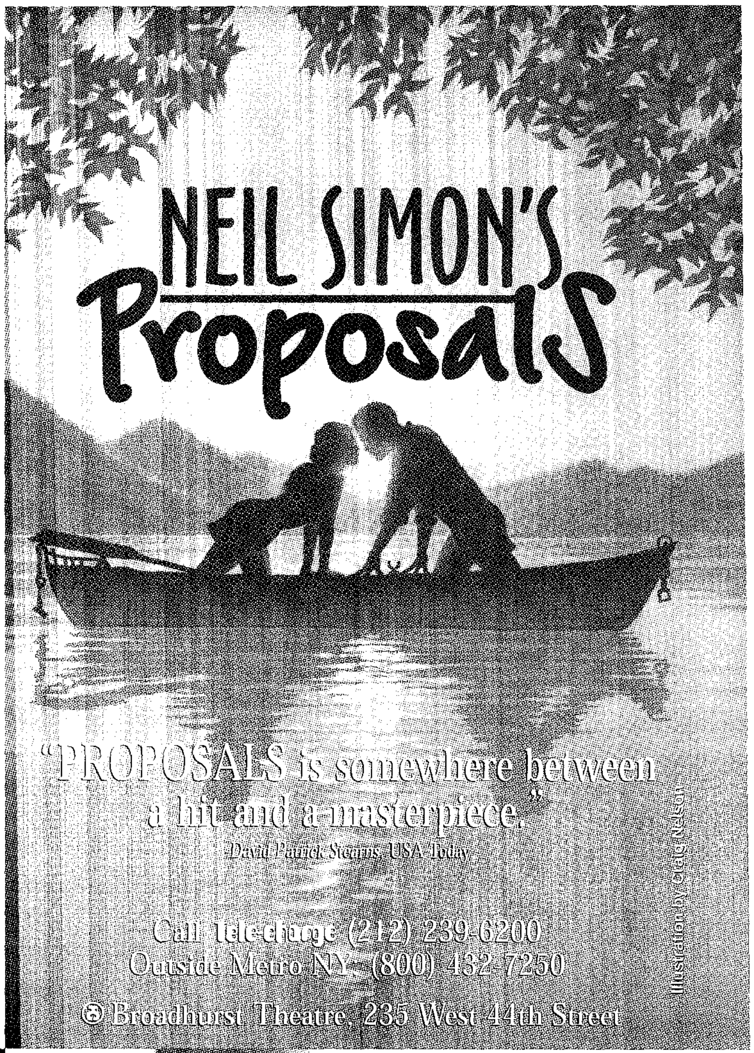

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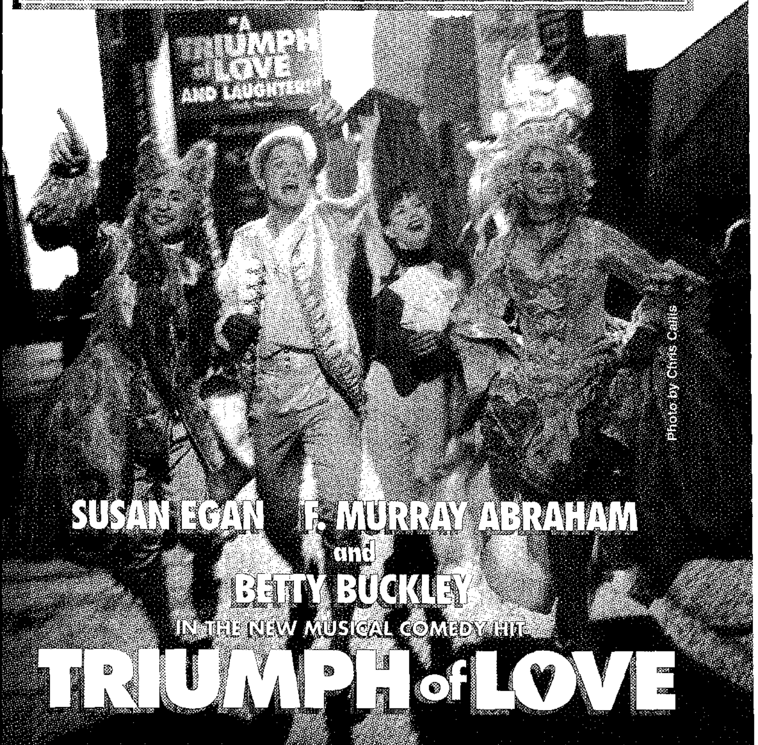
–Nancy Franklin, The New Yorker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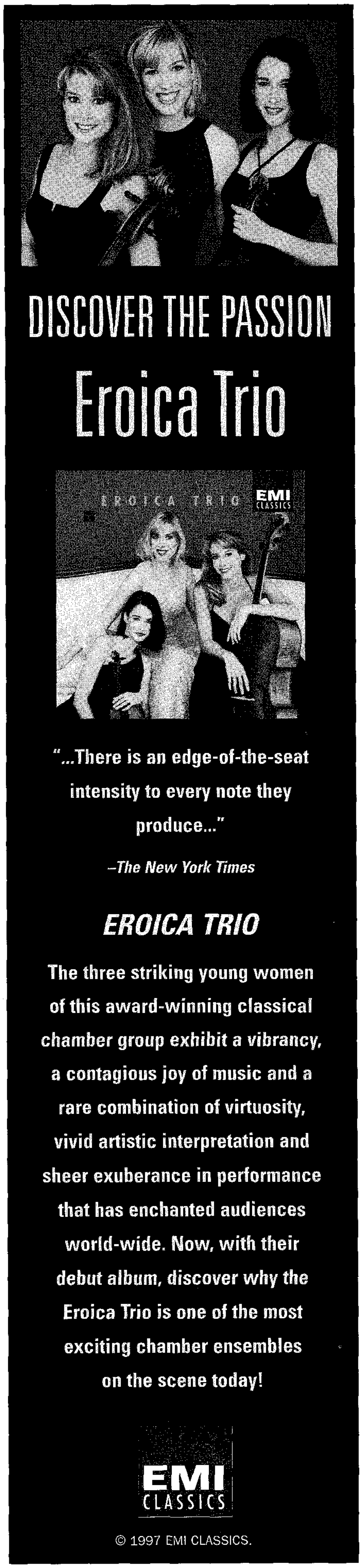
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Nov. 20-23: Tenor saxophonist CHARLES LLOYD. The PAUL MOTIAN ELECTRIC BEBOP BAND (Nov. 25-26) is a two-guitar-and-two-sax ensemble, and it's far better than you'd think. A smart selection of tunes, from Parker and Mingus classics to drummer Motian's own moody originals, gets a serious and energetic treatment. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Now a sprightly septuagenarian, drum titan MAX ROACH (through Nov. 23) has yet to stop exploring diverse musical vistas and play it safe. His partner in diversity for this engagement is the SO WHAT BRASS QUINTET, whose crisp orchestrations match Roach's punctilious rhythms. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Nov. 23: On her latest recording, the singer DEE DEE BRIDGEWATER pays tribute to Ella Fitzgerald, and she once again finds the intersection of sensuality and swing. Dining.

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—A new jazz establishment features some new jazz hopefuls. Through Nov. 23: The GARY BARTZ quartet. The return of saxophonist Bartz is a feel-good tale for the nineties: a comer from the glory days of the late sixties returns, his powers intact, with a sober commitment to straight-ahead swing. On an inspired night, when he feels like parading his harmonic knowledge and his dive-bomber drive, Bartz can be staggering.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Nov. 19-22: STEVE KUHN, a marvellous pianist who finds new vistas in old standards, backed up by a first-rate rhythm section: bassist DAVID FINCK and drummer BILLY DRUMMOND.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Nov. 23: "IN HARMONY," a benefit concert, with a spectacular array of new-jazz and mainstream artists coming out to support the ailing saxophonist Thomas Chapin. Among those featured are Anthony Braxton, Marty Ehrlich, Tom Harrell, John Zorn, Kenny Barron, and Mario Pavone. Alto saxophonist and composer STEVE SLAGLE (Nov. 24) has the dubious distinction of being the last individual to be awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. He marks the end of an era with new works and a hand-picked septet, including trumpeter Eddie Henderson and guitarist Dave Stryker. Starting Nov. 25: HENRY THREADGILL AND MAKE A MOVE.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—Through Dec. 6: "LOUNGEVILLE, VOLUME I . . . MUSIC TO WATCH GIRLS BY." When Ray Coniff becomes a cultural icon, you know fin-de-siècle madness has set in. What better place to give in and accept lounge music as the official soundtrack to the upcoming millennium than a swank club where you can scan the city's many boulevards of broken dreams to the strains of Coniff, Bacharach, Mancini, and Barry (John, not Manilow)? Ellen Foley, Linda Hart, Jessica Molaskey, and Richard Muenz are the stars; musical director Joe McGinty, of Loser's Lounge fame, leads the band.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—The third week in this club's "Drummer's Month" belongs to the BEN RILEY quartet (through Nov. 23). A drummer with a gorgeous touch and fastidious taste, Riley leaves his mark on any band he works with; two classic examples were Thelonious Monk's mid-sixties groups and the vibrant Monk tribute band Sphere. For his own gig, he's left the horns behind and brought in vibes and guitar, played by Steve Nelson and Ted Dunbar, respectively. Kiyoshi Kitagawa holds down the bass spot. From Nov. 25: The VICTOR LEWIS quintet. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club. Through Nov. 23: The BUSTER WILLIAMS quartet. Try this for a parlor game. Name two jazz artists of the past four decades that bassist Williams hasn't played with. Good luck. The ubiquitous virtuoso will have pianist GERI ALLEN on hand to help generate sparks. The VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA holds sway on Mondays.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Nov. 22: Celebrated bassist CECIL MC BEE has long since left behind his instrument's traditional role as second banana; in his hands, those four strings take on the power and fluency of a saxophone. Pianist DON FRIEDMAN, a leading modernist since the late fifties, is his worthy partner.

TABLES FOR TWO

Rosemarie's, 145 Duane St. (285-2610)—Past the mahogany bar, almost hidden beyond an old wooden archway, stands a brick room adorned with photographs of the Italian countryside and, in one huge platinum print, the Escheresque stone arches of a Florentine monastery. Peggy Lee croons. The diners murmur. Rosemary focaccia and other rustic breads arrive with bowls of olive oil. Rosemarie's is the most serene Northern Italian joint in town.

Has the service been in therapy? The waiters time and bring everything without inserting their egos in your conversation. And what dishes they bring: to start with, a *trifolata* (a sautéed-vegetable dish) of porcini and cremini mushrooms paired with pancetta and polenta—a garlicky plateful of autumn. Or mussels in a rich tomato-peperoncini broth, a meal in themselves.

Good as the pastas are (especially the rotund ricotta-and-spinach ravioli on a concentrated roasted-tomato sauce, and the super-savory rigatoni bolognese), this is not the place to make a full meal of them, because the *secondi* are sublime. The osso bucco stands upright, like a castle keep, on a vegetable risotto, anchored by a fat core of marrow. The T-bone-size veal chop reclines in a rich, winey porcini-mushroom sauce. A sliced haunch of seared tuna, so often a depressing cliché, lives happily here with caponata and grilled zucchini. But on a recent visit the star was the *razza*, a skate wing browned in butter, dotted with capers and with pearl onions caramelized into candies, and laid like a blanket over a heap of piquant red cabbage: if the tuna is contented with its friends, this skate has found its soul mates. Likewise the standout dessert, two fresh, crisp mascarpone-filled cannoli on an apricot coulis, with—the kicker—a sprig of candied rosemary: an appropriately sweet and aromatic finish. (Open weekdays for lunch and dinner, Saturdays for dinner only. Entrées $15-$28.)

ROCK, ETC.

Arlene Grocery, 95 Stanton St., between Ludlow and Orchard Sts. (358-1633)—WILLIE NILE, who comes in on Nov. 19, is a dynamo of a singer-songwriter in the Dylansteen mold. Nov. 20: Local power pop with FLUFFER. Nov. 22: Brooklyn troubadour MATT KEATING.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Nov. 19: ROCKAPELLA. Nov. 21: The BACON BROTHERS, a rock and soul band consisting of the movie star Kevin and his older brother, Michael. Nov. 22: BUSTER POINDEXTER AND HIS SPANISH ROCKETSHIP BAND. Sev-

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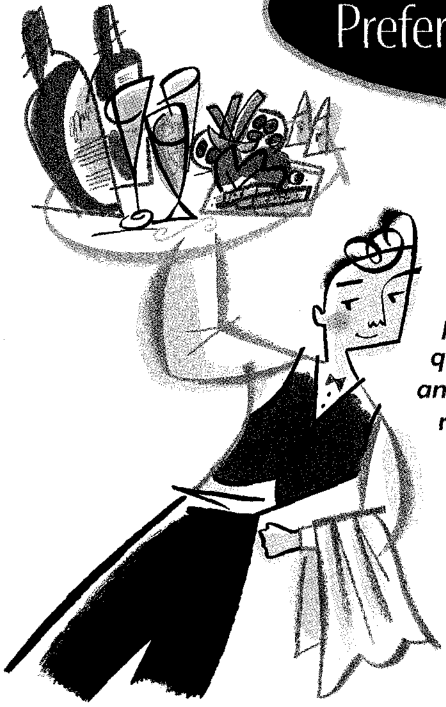
TASTE OF NEW YORK

The VISA Preferred Guide to Dining



By Susan Breslow Sardone

*Are there any words more soothing to a hungry and harried New Yorker than, "Let's go out to dinner?" This week, Visa presents an appealing quartet of restaurants: places to grab a quick bite after a hard day of work or shopping, and places to unwind and enjoy an evening of gourmet pleasure. Thanks to Visa and this restaurant program exclusive to The New Yorker, every time you charge a meal using your Visa® card at the restaurants participating in this and other "Taste of New York" features, you'll also contribute to Citymeals-on-Wheels, a nonprofit organization that delivers hot meals to the homebound elderly.**

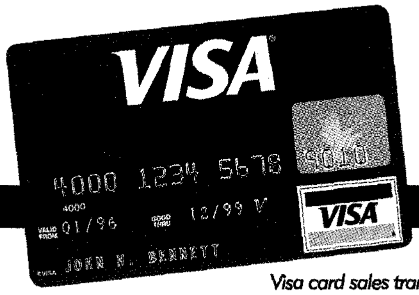
BOLO • 23 East 22nd Street 212-228-2200 • Culinary adventurers and world-weary diners, there's a place for you: Bobby Flay's Bolo presents a unique menu of spicy, Spanish-inspired dishes that tantalize the tastebuds without inflaming the tongue. Even a simple dish like grilled salmon is made dramatically interesting here: it's prepared with an aged sherry-vinegar honey glaze and served with couscous and caramelized root vegetables. A side dish of spinach topped with roasted garlic has none of the bitterness and all the flavor a vegetable lover could want. Or sample Flay's roasted rabbit on pumpkin and mascarpone polenta with chanterelle mushrooms. For dessert, enjoy the creamy chocolate flan with burnt orange syrup, or a quince tart with butterscotch ice cream.

CONTRAPUNTO • 200 East 60th Street • 212-751-8616 Contrapunto has many of the virtues—and none of the vices—of a sidewalk café. Located on the second floor, across from Bloomingdale's, this glass-enclosed restaurant offers a great view of the lively street below. (That's if you ask for a window seat, and you ought to.) Its Italian bistro-style fare is delicious and plentiful, and many patrons return to savor a favorite pasta like cavatelli with broccoli, garlic crumbs, and hot red pepper. Hearty dishes such as honey-glazed duck with citrus-scented arborio rice appease winter appetites. On the Thanksgiving menu: roasted guinea hen stuffed with foie gras and wild mushrooms.

THE PARK • 109 East 56th Street • 212-750-5656 • Located in a grand space formerly occupied by William Randolph Hearst and his paramour Marion Davies, this elegant yet comfortable restaurant preserves touches of its gilded past, such as the Baccarat crystal chandeliers that shed light on plush, green velvet banquettes. Chef Fabrizzio Salerni presents among his appetizers a crabmeat salad in bourbon dressing and a ragoût of snails with fresh morels. Entrées include rack of lamb with parsley crust. A sweet seasonal followup for dessert is the warm, apple tart with bourbon almond cream in a pool of caramel sauce with vanilla ice cream and a ginger tuile. Tamboril, the smoking annex, offers humidors housing fine Dominican cigars, and has an all-day menu at the bar. The restaurant has recently extended its dining service to Sunday.

YELLOWFINGERS DI NUOVO • 200 East 60th Street 212-751-8615 • Downstairs from Contrapunto, Yellowfingers is a lively trattoria with an open kitchen that produces American and Italian favorites. Sip wine by the glass or the margarita of the day while considering the selection of sandwiches, burgers, grilled entrées, and salads. Or try *fa'vecchia*, pizza bread artfully topped with combinations of cheese, sausage, eggplant, or mushrooms (gourmands opt for the artichoke and *capicola* variety). Now on Monday nights, patrons can opt for a lobster dinner, which can be broiled, steamed, or prepared with a mushroom stuffing. ★

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEVEN SALERNO



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enties guitar giant **JOHN MCLAUGHLIN** returns on Nov. 24-25, with a new quintet and a new record, both called "The Heart of Things."

BROWNIES, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—The **GERALDINE FIBBERS** bring their top-shelf alternative rock in on Nov. 21 and Nov. 23. The **FIGGS** (Nov. 22), who recently signed on as Graham Parker's touring band, also play their own brand of poppy punk. Nov. 24: **KING MISSILE III,** the third coming of the downtown slacker combo fronted by spoken-word demon John S. Hall.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Nov. 19: East Village folkie **DANIEL CARTIER.** Nov. 22: **SUSAN MC KEOWN AND THE CHANTING HOUSE** bring in their Celtic pop. **ELLIOTT SMITH** (Nov. 23) is an ascending troubadour in the bleak-and-beautiful mold. The superb singer-songwriter **FREEDY JOHNSTON** continues his residency on Nov. 25. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

THE GREATEST BAR ON EARTH, 1 World Trade Center (524-7000)—The **CHRISTINE SANTELLI BAND** gets down to its bluesy business on Nov. 20.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Nov. 19: The excellent English act **CORNERSHOP,** fronted by the Anglo-Pakistani singer Tjinder Singh, has quickly become one of the most fascinating hybrids around. Capable of reworking everything from melismatic drones to bone-dry Velvets riffs, Cornershop has a pleasantly refreshing ironic charm. Also on the bill is the killer Icelandic trip-pop collective **GUS GUS.** The incredibly abrasive, impossibly irresistible German noise band **ATARI TEENAGE RIOT** shares a bill on Nov. 20 with two indie bands, Shizuo, and Ec8or. Nov. 21: **RIC OCASEK,** the praying mantis-like former leader of the Cars.

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Nov. 20: **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS** try on some new tunes. With **OF MONTREAL.** Nov. 23: **JEFF TWEEDY** and **JAY BENNETT** take a break from their day jobs as members of Wilco. Nov. 25: Topnotch singer-songwriter **KEVIN SALEM.**

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"The Private Collection of Edgar Degas." Through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ "The Drawings of Filippino Lippi and His Circle." An exquisite show of mostly small pen-and-ink, metal-point, and charcoal drawings, heightened by white gouache, on prepared papers of gorgeous hues: rust, salmon pink, blue-gray. The majority are by Filippino himself, the offspring of the prodigiously talented and lustful Carmelite monk Fra Filippo Lippi and a novice named Lucrezia Buti, whom, according to Vasari, he abducted. The father's sensuousness is discernible in the son's gestural sketches, nudes, pietàs, and allegories, and in the work of the son's contemporaries as well—there's a lovely rendering of arms and hands by Raffaelino del Garbo. And a case devoted to process offers unexpected enchantment: inside are a willow twig (for making charcoal), a selection of styluses and goose and chicken quills, a pounce bag (this one filled with charcoal dust), and a seashell filled with bread crumbs (for erasing mistakes). Through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ "Picasso: The Engraver." Through Dec. 21. . . . ¶ "Jackson Pollock: Early Sketchbooks and Drawings." Through Feb. 8. . . . ¶ "Richard Pousette-Dart (1916-92)." Thirty-odd paintings by the late Abstract Expressionist. (See also the Uptown and Photography Short Lists.) Through Feb. 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Egon Schiele: The Leopold Collection, Vienna." More than a hundred and fifty oils, gouaches, watercolors, and sketches by the master draftsman, who, despite his death at twenty-eight from the Spanish flu, made defining contributions to Expressionist and erotic art. (See also Galleries—Uptown, Short List.) Through Jan. 4. . . . ¶ "On the Edge: Contemporary Art from the Werner and Elaine Dannheisser Collection." Through Jan. 20. . . . ¶ "New Photography 13" features work by Rineke Dijkstra, An-My Lê, Vik Muniz, and Kunié Suguara. Through Jan. 13. . . . ¶ "Achille Castiglioni: Design!" Cutlery, spotlights, floor lamps, tractor seats, and other graceful items from the witty Italian designer. Through Jan. 6. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective" offers more than four hundred pieces from nearly half a century of work. At both Guggenheim venues, through Jan. 7. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—The museum's Rauschenberg retrospective continues here. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The Richard Diebenkorn retrospective presents examples from every phase of the California master's career, including early sketches and figure studies, fifties-era abstractions, landscapes from the sixties, the "Ocean Park" series, and the late collages. Through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ "The Warhol Look/Glamour Style Fashion." An investigation into the wigged one's fascination with fashion, which intersperses examples of his art with personal memorabilia (a suit bought in Hong Kong in 1956), re-creations of fifties window displays, videos of Factory-era celebs prepping themselves for interviews, *Interview* covers, and so on. Through Jan. 18. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—"The Nature of Diamonds" looks at many facets of the adamantine stone, from its birth in volcanic fissures that later harden into diamond pipes (re-created here in a simulated mine tunnel) to its eventual rise to the heads of heads of state (e.g., on the crown of Peter the Great, displayed in the exhibition's walk-in diamond vault). Through April 26. . . . ¶ "Drawing Shadows to Stone: Photographing North Pacific Peoples, 1897-1902" commemorates the museum's five-year Jesup expedition, organized by Franz Boas, one of the first anthropological ventures to supplement field observation with photography and recordings. Through March 1. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—Monet did more travelling than the other Impressionists, and he went to some mighty pretty places: "Monet and the Mediterranean" unites paintings of the Riviera, painted in the eighteen-eighties, with those of Venice, from a trip in 1908. This exquisite exhibition therefore shows the artist both on the brink of discovering the "serial procedure" that would become his signature and after having mastered it. The gardens and seascapes of Antibes radiate a delightful freshness; the opulence of the paintings of the Doge's Palace and the Palazzo Dario aflame in dying light is dazzling. Through Jan. 4. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—"Mandala: the Architecture of Enlightenment." Through Jan. 4. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS, 548 W. 22nd St. (989-5912)—"Torqued Ellipses," three new monumental sculptures by Richard Serra in Corten steel. For this series, Serra experimented with hitherto unknown techniques of rolling steel. While the results are characteristically massive, they achieve a quality of fluidity and movement which seems almost delicate. The sculptor has pulled off a most unlikely stunt: he's shown us something new. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

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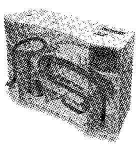

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Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—"Facing the New World: Jewish Portraits in Colonial and Federal America." There's not a lot of great painting here, but that's not the point of this worthy and thoughtful show. Its real focus is the role of Jews, and the imperatives of assimilation (at least among a certain class), in the development of early America. In a vibrant oil-on-ivory miniature, Gershom Mendes Seixas—the first native-born hazan of an American Jewish congregation and the man who pronounced the blessing on George Washington at his inauguration—wears the clerical garb of a Protestant minister. Through Jan. 11. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St. (977-7170)—"The Image Business: Shop and Cigar Store Figures in America" presents familiar threshold icons (twenty cigar-store Indians) and more recondite items (including carvings of Puck, Father Time, and a firefighter). Through Jan. 11. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Rudy Burckhardt and **Joe Brainard**—Burckhardt's homely paintings, in oil on linen, of the fallen, broken, lichen-encrusted trees of the Maine woods have a weird, muted loveliness that leads perfectly into the magical realm of Brainard's work. Hidden around a corner is an irresistible collection of postcard-size collages from the seventies which testify to Brainard's delight in the everyday. Smoldering in an ashtray painted on a generic restaurant check is a cigarette with curls of smoke fashioned from Monopoly money. "I remember making designs in the dark with a fast-moving lit cigarette," Brainard wrote in his famous litany of memories. Here he gives you the pleaure of remembering, too. Both shows through Nov. 29. (De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050.)

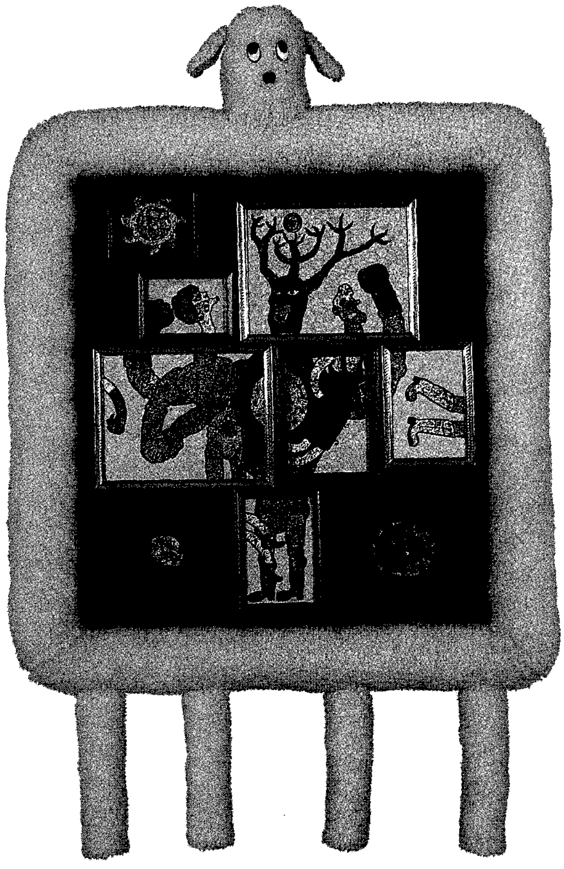
Barbara Kruger—Two rooms of new work. One is crammed with monumental, shoe-polish-white sculptures in lacquer and fibreglass: in "Family," a giddy Marilyn straddles the shoulders of the Kennedy brothers, Hollywood-musical style. In the other hang recent additions to the artist's signature silk-screen blow-ups of stock photos, all of them, this time, cultural icons emblazoned with messages in red, such as the words "Not Angry Enough" across an image of Malcolm X. It is hard to imagine these leaden ironies' being lost on anyone. Through Dec. 20. (Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929.)

Piet Mondrian and Ad Reinhardt—The influence of Dutch De Stijl artists, especially Mondrian, on the American Reinhardt is not a new discovery, but viewing this intelligent selection of the two painters' works side by side enhances our understanding of both sensibilities. Familiar canvases look suddenly new again, and Reinhardt's stunning black paintings in particular appear more serene and lush, more "absolute," than ever. Through Dec. 13. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292.)

Pat Steir—"Wind Water Stone," recent paintings. Steir continues to explore the expressive possibilities of the drip, though there is perhaps a bit more evidence of a deliberate hand in these new works (e.g., a seemingly random passage of cross-hatching). The pictures are wholly abstract, but, as the title of the show suggests, they are richly evocative of atmospheric conditions. Through Nov. 29. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454.)

Robert Weinstock—Judeo-Christian images (the burning bush, the lion and the lamb) fashioned out of the colored foil from chocolate bars and framed in stuffed-animal fur. Like an illustrated children's edition of the Bible, they're simultaneously sweet and threatening. Through Dec. 6. (Giampietro, 25 E. 73rd St. 861-8571.)

Short List—**BEATTIE & DAVIDSON,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888. Through Nov. 29. . . . **PIERRE BONNARD,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays; through Dec. 13. . . . **ALAN DAVIE,** Rickards, 1045 Madison Ave., at 79th St. 924-0858. Through Dec. 13. . . . **BURGOYNE DILLER,** Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. 247-0082. Through Jan. 17. . . . **VIRGIL GROTFELDT,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. 319-1996. Open Mondays; through Dec. 6. . . . **JULIE HEFFERNAN,** Littlejohn, 41 E. 57th St. 980-2323. Through Dec. 17. . . . **YVES KLEIN,** Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Through Nov. 29. . . . **FRANZ KLINE,** Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 988-6870. Through Jan. 17. . . . **GABRIEL LADERMAN,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907. Through Dec. 3. . . . **EUGÈNE LEROY,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. 988-1623. Open Mondays; through Nov. 29. . . . **SOL LE WITT,** Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Through Jan. 3 (see also Galleries—Chelsea). . . . **SHERIDAN LORD,** Peter Findlay, 41 E. 57th St. 644-4433. Through Nov. 25. . . . **ANA MENDIETA,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. 315-0470. Through Dec. 20. . . . **RICHARD POUSETTE-DART,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 794-0550. Through Nov. 29. . . . **MAN RAY,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. 752-0124. Through Dec. 20. . . . **JOHN SINGER SARGENT,** Adelson, 25 E. 77th St. 439-6800. Through Dec. 13. . . . **EGON SCHIELE,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. 245-6734. Through Jan. 3. . . . **CY TWOMBLY,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 744-2313. Through Dec. 20.



"The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden," by Robert Weinstock (Giampietro).

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Matthew Barney—Sculptures and photographs related to the artist's latest film, "Cremaster 5." Through Dec. 20. (Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 206-9300.)

Nina Bovasso—Paintings made of bright blobs and wee stickums and watery stains, compounded heroically until they look like marathon phone doodles or clouds of interstellar dust. Very sociable and up-cycle manic-depressive. Through Nov. 29. (Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937.)

Rodney Graham—"Vexation Island," a new film by the Canadian Conceptualist, which features him, dressed in eighteenth-century costume, as a castaway on a desert island, his only companion a rather sardonic-looking parrot. It's beautiful but hard to fathom. (The press release cites Deleuze and Freud, but that's not much help). Through Dec. 20. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121.)

Sol LeWitt—Maquettes, gouaches, and sculptures, including "Four-Sided Pyramid," an astonishing tower of approximately eleven hundred cement blocks. The artist demonstrates here, as he has in several New York exhibitions over the past few years, how the systematic array of basic forms can yield sublime results. Paula Cooper continues to serve as one of the preëminent venues for large-scale minimalist art. Through Nov. 22. (534 W. 21st St. 255-1105.)

Terry Winters—A group of recent large-scale abstract paintings. Through Dec. 24. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200. Opens at noon.)

Group Show—Steel sculptures by Mark di Suvero, Nancy Graves, Beverly Pepper, Judy Pfaff, George Rickey, Jeffrey Rubinoff, and Ann Sperry. Through Dec. 13. (Two Sculptors, 124 W. 18th St. 645-3584.)

Short List—**PAUL BLOODGOOD AND MARY BETH EDELSON,** Art Resources Transfer, 504 W. 22nd St. 691-5956. Through Nov. 30. . . . **JANET CARDIFF AND GEORGE BURES MILLER,** Morris-Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. 243-3753. Through Dec. 27. . . . **MARY CARLSON,** Maynes, 529 W. 20th St. 741-3318. Through Dec. 13. . . . **OLIVER HERRING,** Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999. Through Dec. 6. . . . **FRANK HOLLIDAY,** Debs, 529 W. 20th St. 647-7080. Through Dec. 6. . . . **JACQUELINE HUMPHRIES,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through Nov. 29. . . . **ROBERT LONGO,** Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Through Jan. 10. . . . **KEHNET NIELSEN,** DCA Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-5511. Through Dec. 20. . . . **STEVEN PARRINO,** Team, 527 W. 26th St. 279-9219. Through Dec. 20.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Keith Mayerson—Paintings and drawings of a diverse band of role models and love objects, including Frankenstein, Keanu Reeves, and Alain Delon. Through Nov. 29. (Gorney, 100 Greene St. 966-4480.)

Carl Palazzolo—A series of smoky paintings in the artist's "personal history of Italian film." Through Dec. 20. (Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012.)

Susan Rothenberg—New paintings by one of the art stars of the eighties. Rothenberg is finally moving beyond her signature image of the horse: in this series favoring figural groups, she works up dense, sensuous crusts of weathered paint but then undercuts their obvious appeal with an unsettling palette of dirty pinks, yellows, and whites. These are among the most difficult paintings of her career. Through Dec. 13. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685.)

Julian Schnabel—"Portrait Paintings," a new series of large-scale works by an enfant terrible of New Expressionism, which balance his strengths (exuberant and virtuoso handling of paint) against his weaknesses (slapdash carelessness). Schnabel is extremely prolific; on the evidence of this show, he might do himself a favor by working a bit more deliberately, but perhaps that would seem less . . . heroic. Through Dec. 13. (Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224.)

Shahzia Sikander—Murals and miniatures by the young Pakistani artist. Stock gender-issue phantasmagoria (Little Red Riding-

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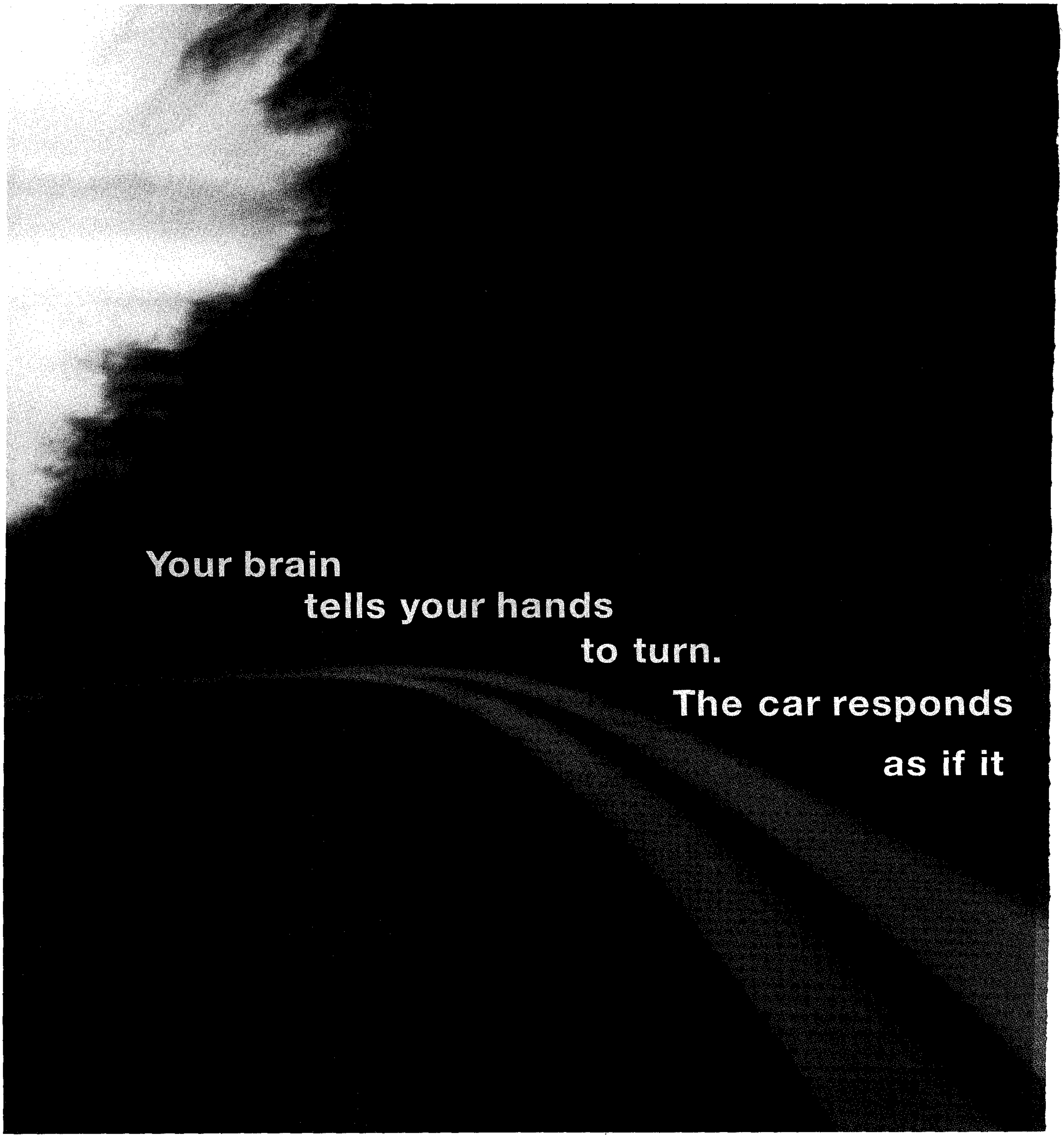
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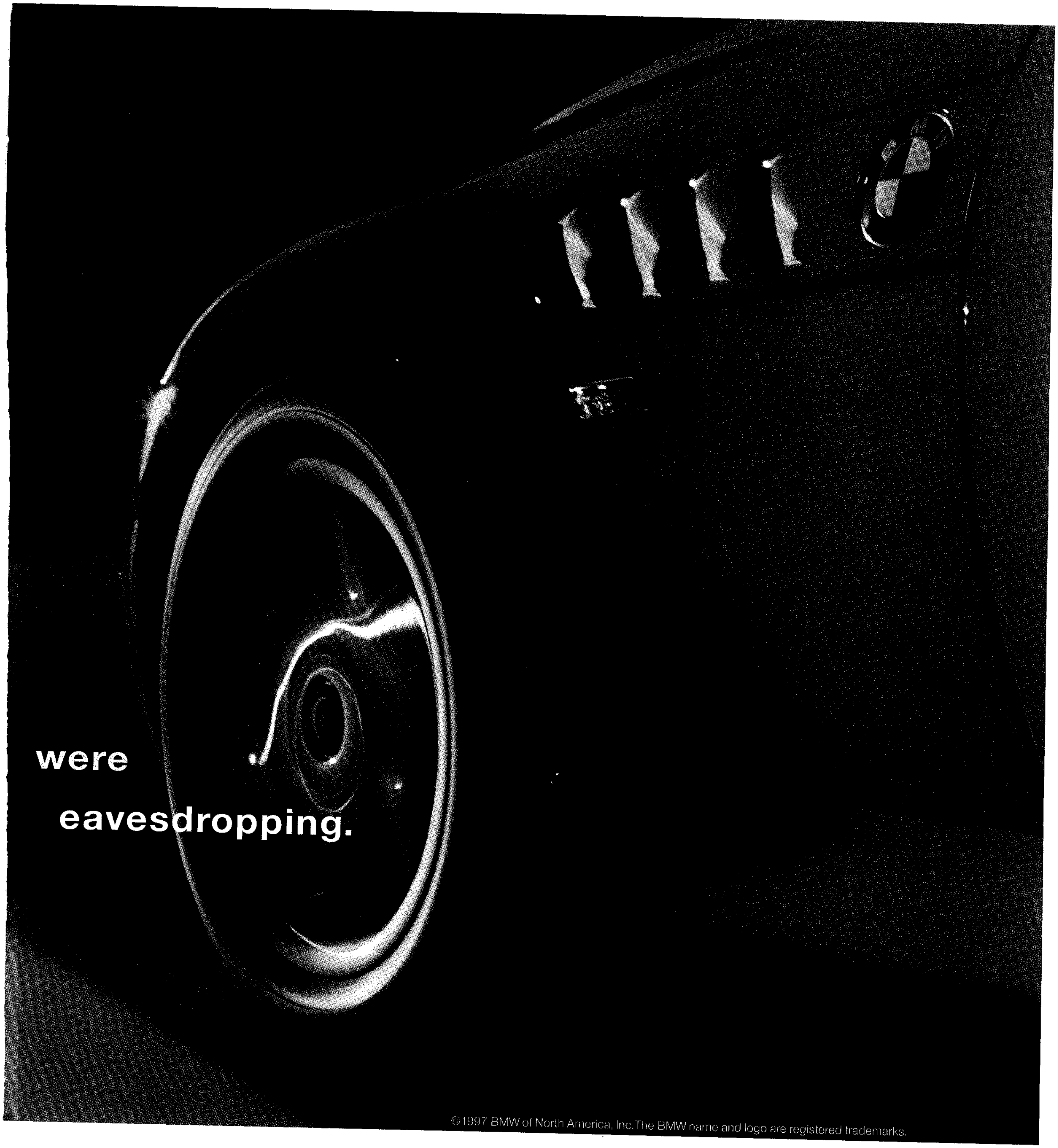
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Hood, veiled women, headless nudes with knives) cannot detract from the poetic hermeticism of the miniatures, with their tea-stained borders and dizzying layers of rich pattern and elusive symbolism. Through Dec. 20. (Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300.)

"Coming Home Again"—Works by recent alumni of the School of Visual Arts, including such stars as Alexis Rockman, Elizabeth Peyton, and Gary Simmons. Through Nov. 29. (Visual Arts Gallery, 137 Wooster St. 598-0221.)

Short List—**donald baechler,** Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St., 274-9300, through Dec. 6; and Kasmin, 74 Grand St., 219-3219, through Dec. 13. . . . **janet biggs,** Kustera, 41 Wooster St. 965-1527. Through Dec. 20. . . . **bryan crockett,** Fotouhi Cramer, 560 Broadway. 431-1304. Through Jan. 3. . . . **rupert deese,** Hoffman, 429 West Broadway. 966-6676. Through Dec. 3. . . . **anna gaskell,** Kaplan, 48 Greene St. 226-6131. Through Dec. 20. . . . **brenda goodman,** Steele, 420 West Broadway. 941-8388. Through Nov. 29. . . . **huang yong ping,** Tilton, 49 Greene St. 941-1775. Through Dec. 13. . . . **beatriz milhazes,** Thorp, 103 Prince St. 431-6880. Through Jan. 10. . . . **antonio murado,** Schoormans, 12 E. 2nd St. 477-6953. Through Nov. 29. . . . **raymond pettibon,** Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074. Through Nov. 29. . . . **fura s.,** 123 Watts Gallery, 123 Watts St. 219-1482. Through Dec. 7. . . . **david sandlin,** Gracie Mansion Gallery, 54 St. Marks Pl. 505-7055. Through Nov. 22. . . . **richard serra,** Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828. Through Dec. 20. . . . **arpita singh,** Bose Pacia Modern, 580 Broadway. 966-3224. Through Dec. 20. . . . **haim steinbach,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. 966-6160. Through Dec. 6.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Sotheby's—Nov. 19-20: Contemporary paintings and sculptures, including Rauschenberg's "Bicycle," one of the largest of the colored collage series the artist produced in 1963-64. . . . ¶ Nov. 20: The sale of the Keir Collection, widely regarded as the world's most remarkable privately held collection of medieval enamels. . . . ¶ Nov. 21-22: Fine and rare wines. . . . ¶ Nov. 24: Pre-Columbian art. . . . ¶ Nov. 25: Rare books and fine bindings. . . . ¶ Nov. 25-26: Latin-American art, with works by Rivera, Lam, Botero, and others. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

Christie's—Nov. 19: Contemporary paintings and sculptures. . . . ¶ Nov. 20: Tribal art. . . . ¶ Nov. 24: Japanese prints, paintings, and screens. . . . ¶ Nov. 24-25: Latin-American paintings, drawings, and sculptures, plus twenty-five lots of Colonial art. . . . ¶ Nov. 25: Korean art. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.)

Phillips—An auction of golfing memorabilia, including many nineteenth-century clubs and balls. (406 E. 79th St. 570-4830. Nov. 22.)

Swann—A rare-book auction. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. Nov. 20.)

Judaica—An auction of volumes from the collection of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America includes notable items from the Renaissance. (Doral Park Avenue Hotel, Park Ave. S. at 38th St. Nov. 25. For information, call 366-1197.)

Triple Pier Show—The final weekend of this sprawling event for treasure seekers of all stripes. (Piers 88, 90, and 92, Twelfth Ave. from 48th St. to 52nd St. Nov. 22-23. For information, call 255-0020.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Tom Baril—The artist's latest large-scale works: exquisitely toned and printed pictures of poppies, dahlias, peonies, and columbines. Five atmospheric beachscapes serve to cleanse the palate, as does an atypical view of the Chrysler Building which dwells on all the Deco detail below the famous spire. Through Dec. 6. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

Antonin Kratochvil—"Broken Dream," a striking, subtle twenty-year record of desolation and hope in Eastern Europe. The photographer's use of wide-angle lenses and his predilection for movement and for off-kilter compositions give these pictures a rare and powerful sense of space. Through Dec. 1. (SABA, 116 E. 16th St. 477-7722. Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)

At New York City Opera, "Marco Polo" composer Tan Dun and singer Chen Shi-Zheng.

Susan Rankaitis—"Gold Science Ghost Drawings," a suite of six mixed-medium abstract prints with intriguing surfaces that look like brushed aluminum and rusted iron. Through Dec. 13. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223.)

Larry Towell—The well-travelled photojournalist's black-and-white "Family Album" is a paean to home, in this case a seventy-five-acre farm in Ontario. Most of the images of kids, kittens, the swimming hole, and the front porch feel just right, if a bit safe. But one, "Black Locust Trees," shines brighter than the rest. Setting directly behind a dead, hollow tree, the weak sun illuminates a field and a dusty road; a girl reaches from inside the tree, beckoning to her cat to join her. Through Dec. 13. (Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

Short List—**max aguilera-hellweg,** Kasher, 54 North Moore St. 966-3978. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6; through Dec. 6. . . . **erwin blumenfeld** and **andré kertész,** Danziger, 130 Prince St. 226-0056. Both shows through Dec. 6. . . . **mario cravo neto,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510. Through Dec. 6. . . . **ralston crawford** and **ray k. metzker,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220. Both shows through Nov. 29. . . . **františek drtikol** and **richard gere,** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010. Both shows through Dec. 6. . . . **seiichi furuya,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454. Through Jan. 3. . . . **andreas gursky,** Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through Dec. 24. . . . **imre kinszki,** Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through Dec. 6. . . . **hiroji kubota,** Equitable, Seventh Ave. at 52nd St. 554-4818. Open Mondays; through Jan. 3. . . . **danny lyon,** Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through Jan. 18. . . . **lászló moholy-nagy** and **michal rovner,** Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Both shows through Nov. 29. . . . **richard pousette-dart,** Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 752-1223. Through Dec. 20. . . . **miguel rio branco,** D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460. Through Dec. 6.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the American Museum of Natural History.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall is 247-7800, and for Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St., 854-7799.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**turandot,** with Eva Marton, Ruth Ann Swenson, Kristján Jóhannsson, and Sergei Koptchak; conducted by Nello Santi. (Nov. 19 and Nov. 22 at 8.) . . . Opening performances of a new production of **the rake's progress,** by Stravinsky, with Dawn Upshaw, Denyce Graves, Jerry Hadley, and Samuel Ramey; James Levine. (Nov. 20 and Nov. 24 at 8.) . . . **don giovanni,** with Deborah Riedel, Amanda Roocroft, Maria Bayo, Stanford Olsen, Dwayne Croft, and Ildebrando d'Arcangelo; Daniel Beckwith. (Nov. 21 at 8.) . . . **tannhäuser,** with Sharon Sweet, Marilyn Schmiege, Ms. Upshaw, Jon Fredric West, Bryn Terfel, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; Mr. Levine. (Nov. 22 at 12:30.) . . . With Mechthild Gessendorf, Jeannine Altmeyer, Ms. Upshaw, Wolfgang Schmidt, Mr. Terfel, and John Macurdy; Paul Nadler. (Nov. 25 at 7:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

New York City Opera—Final performances of the fall season. **marco polo,** by Tan Dun. (Nov. 19 at 7:30 and Nov. 22 at 8.) . . . **la bohème.** (Nov. 20 at 7:30, Nov. 21 at 8, and Nov. 22-23 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. . . . **note:** The company's spring season begins March 6.)

Novaya Opera Theatre—The Moscow-based company presents "Eugene Onegin." (Martin Beck Theatre, 302 W. 45th St. Nov. 19-21 and Nov. 25 at 8, Nov. 22 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 23 at 2 and 7. Through Nov. 30. For information about tickets, call 239-6200.)

Opera Orchestra of New York—Performing a concert version of Rossini's "Tancredi," featuring soprano Maureen O'Flynn, mezzo-soprano Vesselina Kasarova (in her first New York appearance), and tenor Robert Breault. Eve Queler conducts. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 23 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Richard Westerfield conducting. Nov. 20 and Nov. 22 at 8, Nov. 21 at 11 A.M., and Nov. 25 at 7:30: Mendelssohn's E-Minor Violin Concerto (with Akiko Suwanai) and

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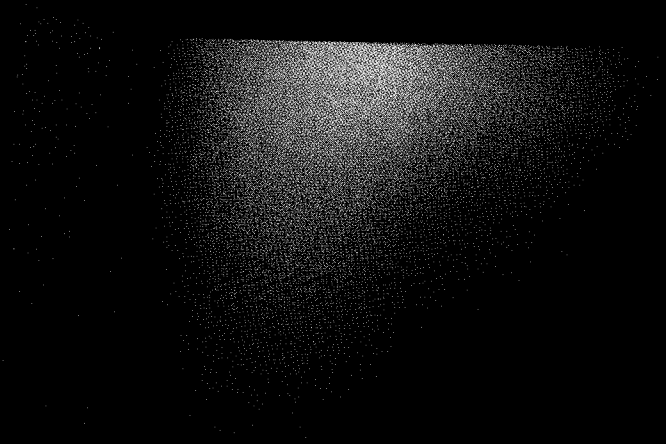

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SONY

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Shostakovich's Symphony No. 8. . . . ¶ Nov. 22 at 2: An all-Mendelssohn Young People's Concert. (875-5030.)

Orchestra of St. Luke's and New York Choral Artists—Lawrence Foster leads ex-Beatle Paul McCartney's symphonic poem "Standing Stone." (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 19 at 8.)

Choir and Orchestra of St. Ignatius Loyola—Kent Tritle directs Monteverdi's "Vespro della Beata Vergine" (a.k.a. the "Vespers of 1610"). (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. Nov. 20 at 8.)

Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin—At Carnegie Hall, Vladimir Ashkenazy conducting. Nov. 20 at 8: Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 1 (featuring Olli Mustonen) and Mahler's Symphony No. 5. . . . ¶ Nov. 21 at 8: Kodály's "Dances of Galantá," Mendelssohn's E-Minor Violin Concerto (with Christian Tetzlaff), and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 10.

Canticum Novum Singers—The ensemble is celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary season by indulging itself with twenty-five Bach cantatas. In this concert, Harold Rosenbaum directs no fewer than seven of them: No. 106 (the "Actus Tragicus"), No. 54 ("Widerstehe doch der Sünde"), No. 61 (Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland"), No. 196 ("Der Herr denket an uns"), No. 82 ("Ich habe genug"), No. 131 ("Aus der Tiefe"), and No. 4 ("Christ lag in Todesbanden"). Soprano Elizabeth Farnum, countertenor Jeffrey Gall, tenor Frederick Urrey, and bass David Arnold are the soloists. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Nov. 22 at 8.)

Collegiate Chorale and Mannes Orchestra—Robert Bass directs Verdi's Requiem. (St. Paul the Apostle Church, Ninth Ave. at 60th St. Nov. 22 at 8. For information about tickets, call 664-1390.)

Cappella Oratoriana—A period-instrument ensemble joins the choir in a program of sacred works by Lassus, Carissimi, Domenico Mazzocchi (his "Dialogo dell'Apocalisse"), and Mazzocchi's pupil Mario Savioni. Dennis Bernard Delaney directs. (Oratory Church of St. Boniface, Willoughby and Duffield Sts., Brooklyn. 718-875-2096. Nov. 22 at 8.)

City Island Baroque Ensemble—Flutist Sato Moughalian and violinist Anton Miller are the soloists in concertos by Mozart. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Nov. 23 at noon.)

Florilegium Chamber Choir—JoAnn Rice directs Mendelssohn's "Antigone," a "choral masque" commissioned in 1840 by the classics-loving Friedrich Wilhelm IV, King of Prussia. (German Church, 315 W. 22nd St. Nov. 23 at 3. Tickets at the door.)

Cerddorian Vocal Ensemble and Charis Chamber Voices—Two choruses present works for single and double choir, by Bach, Schütz, Schein, and Giovanni Gabrieli. (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. Nov. 23 at 7:30. Tickets at the door.)

Jupiter Symphony—This is a big month around town for Gabriel Pierné (1863-1937): last week the National Symphony Orchestra offered his oratorio "La Croisade des Enfants"; this week Jens Nygaard leads his orchestra in the composer's rarely performed Piano Concerto, written in 1887 (and here featuring David Korevaar). Pierné had stellar teachers at the Paris Conservatoire—including Franck for organ and Massenet for composition—and, by the time he left school to reap the benefits of a Prix de Rome, he had been awarded three coveted *premiers prix*. He produced an awful lot of music in the ensuing decades, and, though most of it has fallen out of the repertoire, a number of his pieces deserve to be revived from time to time. Also on the program are Haydn's Symphony No. 82, Wieniawski's "Polonaise, Legend, and Tarantella" (featuring violinist Stephanie Chase), and a new work by Robert Miller. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Nov. 24 at 2 and 7 and Nov. 25 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra—The conductorless ensemble performs a suite from Handel's "Water Music" and Elizabeth Brown's "Lost

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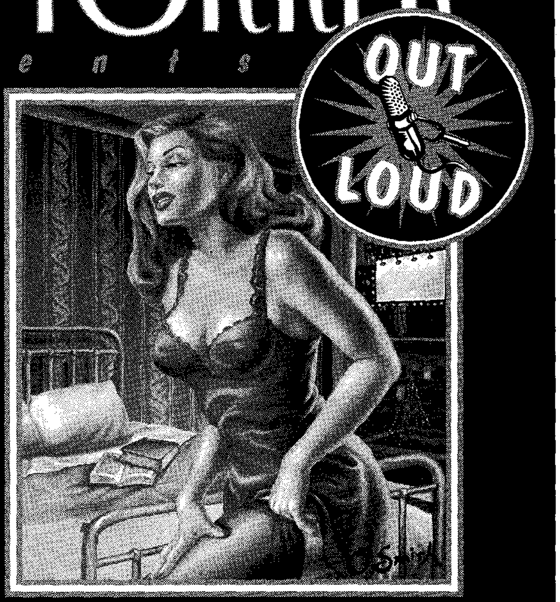

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Waltz,'' as well as Mozart's Piano Concertos in E-Flat Major (K. 271, the ''Jeunehomme'') and C Minor (K. 491). Richard Goode is the soloist. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 24 at 8.)

RECITALS

Angela Hewitt—The pianist, especially noted for her interpretations of Bach, performs eight preludes and fugues from Book One of ''The Well-Tempered Clavier,'' the ''Italian'' Concerto, and the Partita No. 6. (Miller Theatre. Nov. 19 at 8.)

Music by John Corigliano—The Corigliano String Quartet, assisted by pianist David Allen Wehr, performs music by its namesake, who will be present for an onstage conversation with fellow-composer Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. A sonata by Mozart and selections of traditional Moroccan music round out the program. (Weill Recital Hall. Nov. 19 at 8.)

Four Nations Ensemble—The period-instrument players mark their tenth anniversary with a program of works by Vivaldi, Couperin (his ''L'Apothéose de Corelli''), Michel Corrette, and Johann Heinrich Schmelzer. (Friends Meeting House, 15 Rutherford Pl., between Second and Third Aves. Nov. 19 at 8. For information about tickets, call 718-622-3695.)

Bargemusic—Nov. 20 at 7:30: Chamber works by Mozart, Bartók, Tartini, and Schubert (his ''Trout'' Quintet), with violinist Ani Kavafian, violist Paul Neubauer, cellist Fred Sherry, double-bassist Peter Lloyd, and pianist Barbara Meister. . . . ¶ Nov. 23 at 4: The musical McDermott sisters—violinist Kerry, cellist Maureen, and pianist Anne-Marie—offer trios by Haydn, Borodin, and Schubert (in B-Flat Major). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

New Millennium Ensemble—In the final concert of the Sonic Boom Festival, the group performs works by C. Bryan Rulon, Arturo Salinas, David Lang, Ed Harsh, and Bun-Ching Lam. (Miller Theatre. Nov. 20 at 8.)

Dominique Labella and Lorraine Hunt—The soprano and mezzo-soprano spell each other in a recital of songs about heaven, ranging from classics by Schubert and Schumann to modern American pieces by Lee Hoiby and Ricky Ian Gordon. Pianist Steven Blier assists. Presented by New York Festival of Song. (Weill Recital Hall. Nov. 20 at 8.)

Steven Tharp—The tenor performs song settings of Heine's poetry, by Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Wagner, and Schumann (his ''Dichterliebe''); with pianist Will Crutchfield. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 21 at 8.)

New Juilliard Ensemble—Joel Sachs leads the premières of works by Paul-Heinz Dittrich, Mark Kopytman, and Valentin Bibik, as well as a composition by Renaud Gagneux. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 21 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

The Sound of Degas—In a program crafted to complement the Metropolitan Museum's exhibit of Degas's art collection, noted chamber players perform two works that shed light on the musical climate of Degas's Paris: Schumann's A-Major String Quartet and Chausson's Concerto for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 22 at 7. . . . **note:** On Nov. 22 at 4, a group of scholars discusses the role of chamber music in late-nineteenth-century Paris. Admission is free to those holding tickets for the evening concert.)

Emerson String Quartet—The foursome begins the second season of a series in which the quartets of Beethoven stand shoulder to shoulder with twentieth-century masterworks. The Emerson's enormously satisfying recording of Beethoven's sixteen quartets, released earlier this year by Deutsche Grammophon, leaves no doubt that its members have important things to say about the composer. Hearing them relate the eternally revolutionary Beethoven to the music of our century has so far proved just as revelatory. In this concert, they set Berg's String Quartet next to Beethoven's Quartets in G Major (Op. 18, No. 2) and E-Flat Major (Op. 127). (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Nov. 23 at 2.)

Dirk Joeres—The German pianist offers a program of music by Brahms (his F-Minor Sonata and his Op. 10 Ballades) and his friends Albert Dietrich, Theodor Kirchner, and Clara and Robert Schumann. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Nov. 23 at 5.)

Salon Soirées—Piano quartets by Schumann and Mozart (in G Minor), performed by violinist Lara St. John, violist Ori Kam, cellist Susan Chung, and pianist Ilan Rechtman. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Nov. 23 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Maria Bayo—In her New York début recital, the Spanish soprano offers songs by Canteloube, Eduardo Toldrá, Rodrigo, and Granados; pianist Brian Zeger assists. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center. Nov. 24 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

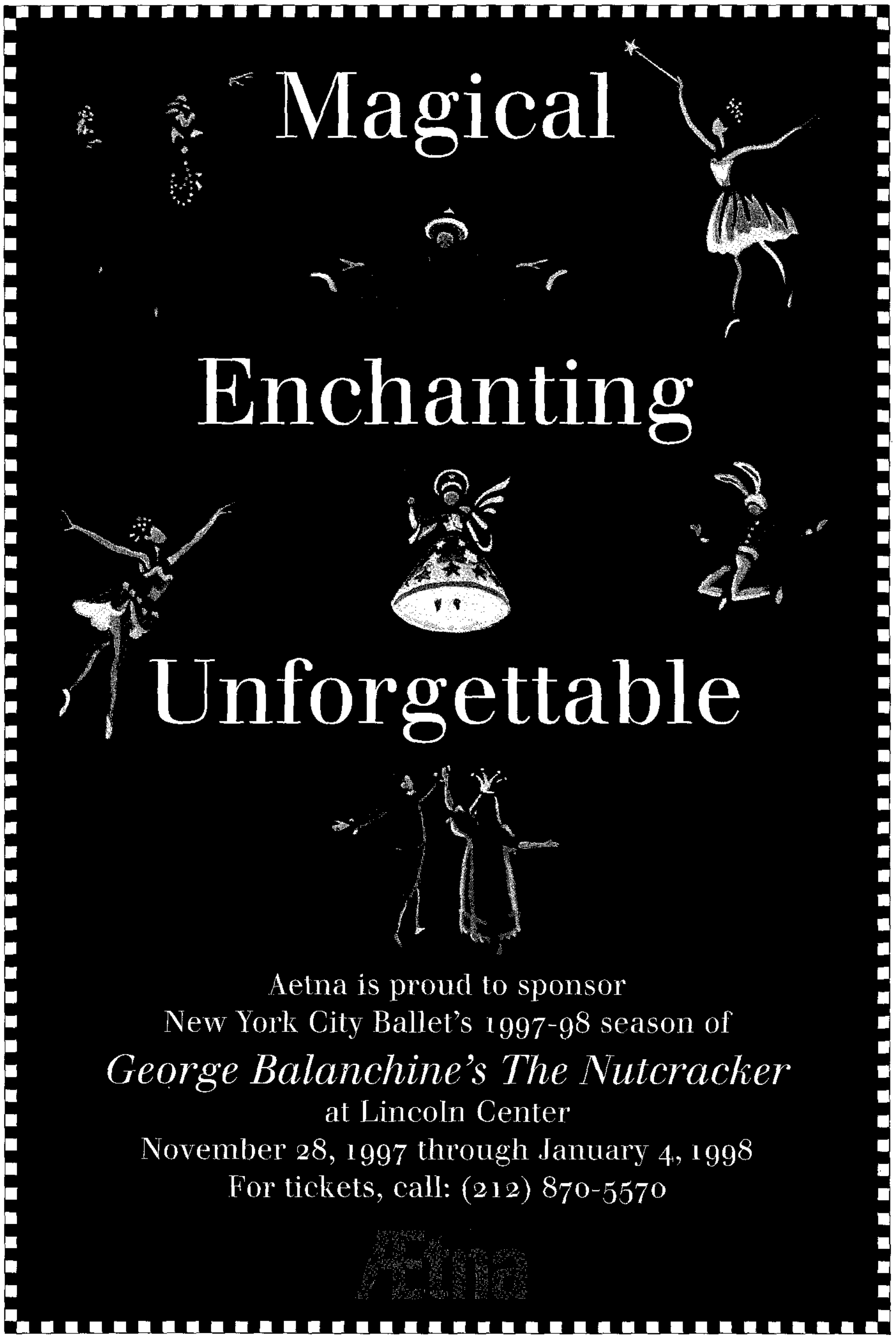
Marc Ponthus—Pianist, performing a recital of dense and difficult music: Beethoven's Sonata in B-Flat Major (Op. 106, the ''Hammerklavier''), Boulez's notoriously challenging Sonata No. 2, and all of Webern's serial pieces for piano solo (a slim corpus, here expanded by some unpublished fragments). (Miller Theatre. Nov. 25 at 8.)

McNeil Robinson—Organist, performing works by Franck, Duruflé, and Dupré. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Nov. 25 at 8. For information about tickets, call 254-8620.)

"Vera . . . Life of a Diva"—A diva whose life is a drag, that is, since the eponymous star, Vera Galupe-Borszkh, is the alter ego of Ira Siff, founder of the opera troupe *en travesti* La Gran Scena (which joins in for these performances). (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Nov. 25 and Nov. 28-29 at 8 and Nov. 30 at 7.)

ALSO OF INTEREST

schubertiade: A Schubert soirée in a period setting, with pianist Kenneth Hamrick and the American Virtuosi. (Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. 4th St. 777-1089. Nov. 19



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Felice Frankel

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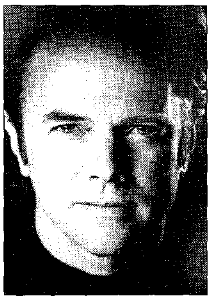


at 8. A benefit concert.) . . . **TRINITY CHOIR ENSEMBLE AND INSTRUMENTALISTS:** Performing Bach's Cantatas No. 1 and No. 65. (Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. Nov. 20 at 1. Admission by contribution.) . . . **YUN SUN:** Pianist. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Nov. 20 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 769-6903.) . . . **GOLDEN FLEECE LTD.:** New operatic works by Jeremy Beck, Joel Feigin, and Richard Owen. (Sanford Meisner Theatre, 164 Eleventh Ave., at 22nd St. Nov. 20-21 at 8 and Nov. 22-23 at 3 and 8. For information about tickets, call 691-6105.) . . . **MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC OPERA THEATRE:** Staged scenes from seven operas. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Nov. 21 at 8 and Nov. 23 at 2:30. No tickets necessary.) . . . **MUSIC BY YAVHEN STANKOVYCH.** Virko Baley conducts. (Ukrainian Institute, 2 E. 79th St. 288-8660. Nov. 22 at 8.). . . **GUITAR AMONG OTHERS:** Presenting flutist Suzanne Gilchrest and guitarist Winslow Browning in recital. (St. Luke In-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. Nov. 23 at 3. Tickets at the door.) . . . **JOHN OSBORN:** Tenor, in a song recital. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Nov. 23 at 3.) . . . **WEST-PARK CHAMBER SOCIETY:** Works by Amy Beach, Sofia Gubaidulina, and other women. (West-Park Presbyterian Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 86th St. Nov. 24 at 7:30. Tickets at the door.) . . . **MINDY KAUFMAN:** Flutist, performing works by Handel, C. P. E. Bach, Godard, and others, with pianist Ilan Rechtman. (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. Nov. 24 at 8. No tickets necessary.) . . . **MAKOTO NAKURA:** Marimbist; presented by Young Concert Artists. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. Nov. 25 at 8. For information about tickets, call 307-6655.) . . . **AREOPAGITICA:** A brass trio. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. Nov. 25 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

BIG APPLE CIRCUS—Celebrating its twentieth anniversary, New York City's resident troupe of clowns, acrobats, and pachyderms opens its big top to Arturo Alegria (a high-speed juggler from Mexico), David Dimitri (a tight-wire master from Switzerland), and the Kuznetsov troupe (high-flying acrobats from Russia), among other international guest performers. (Lincoln Center. 874-8990. Through Jan. 11.)

LEND ME YOUR EAR—Fifteen raconteurs, including Stephanie Gilbert, who is the South Street Seaport Museum's resident storyteller, short-story writer Lisa Lipkin, and playwright Alvin Eng, gather at the Museum of the City of New York for Tellabration 1997, an evening of yarn spinning for grownups. (Fifth Ave. at 104th St. For reservations, which are required, call 613-3117. Nov. 22 at 7.)

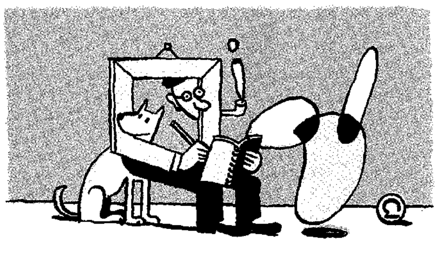
READINGS—Nov. 19 at 7: By Darcey Steinke, Rikki Ducornet, and Eli Gottlieb, from their recent fiction. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ Nov. 20 at 7: By Billy Collins, from his poetry. (Biblio's, 317 Church St. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ Nov. 23 at 7: Actors Kathryn Walker and Brett Egon and writer Alison Rose join Alec Wilkinson for a dramatic reading from his 1993 *New Yorker* article about Mr. Apology, an artist who solicits confessions over the telephone. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS—Nov. 20 at 6:30: Art historian Lisa Farrington, just back from Hispaniola, discusses the influence of voodoo on Haitian art. (Swayduck Auditorium, New School, 65 Fifth Ave., at 14th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Nov. 22 at 2: Oscar Andrew Hammerstein talks about how his great-grandfather changed Times Square—and history—when he opened the first theatre in the neighborhood (then called Longacre Square), in 1895. (New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. 873-3400.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Prose Portraits

ATTEMPTING to illuminate the myth of Andy Warhol, the art critic Robert Hughes notes in his collection of essays NOTHING IF NOT CRITICAL (Viking) that the artist once told an interviewer, "If you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind it."



EVER MEULEN

Even if we don't *really* know Warhol (who is currently the subject of a large exhibition at the Whitney Museum), it's easy for us to feel as if we do. But when it comes to other artists, we're not usually so lucky. "Compared to writers and politicians, artists don't leave behind many letters or diaries," says the art critic Deborah Solomon, the author of UTOPIA PARKWAY: THE LIFE AND WORK OF JOSEPH CORNELL (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). "And that makes their private lives hard to chronicle and explains why artists in general remain underbiographied. Amazingly, there are still no full-scale biographies of Matisse, Braque, or Monet."

James Lord's GIACOMETTI (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) is perhaps Solomon's favorite such study. "Lord believes in the old notion of artists as privileged, inspired superheroes, which makes him an exhilarating read in our current inflationary, post-Warhol age, when most people think of artists as businessmen with a paintbrush." She also admires Sanford Schwartz's CHRISTEN KØBKE (Timken), a biography of the Danish painter, and has a certain affection for Irving Stone's LUST FOR LIFE (Plume), a fictionalized life of Vincent van Gogh. "He made it all up," she concedes. "Still, his gossipy, romanticized portrait of Vincent feels right."

But the book Solomon calls "the mother of all artist biographies" is Giorgio Vasari's LIVES OF THE ARTISTS (Penguin), which was first published in 1550. "Vasari relied heavily on gossip and speculation," Solomon says. "He was basically the Liz Smith of the sixteenth-century Florentine art scene. And his career proves that hearsay can have incalculable historical value." That's something Warhol knew, too.

STEPHEN E. AMBROSE.

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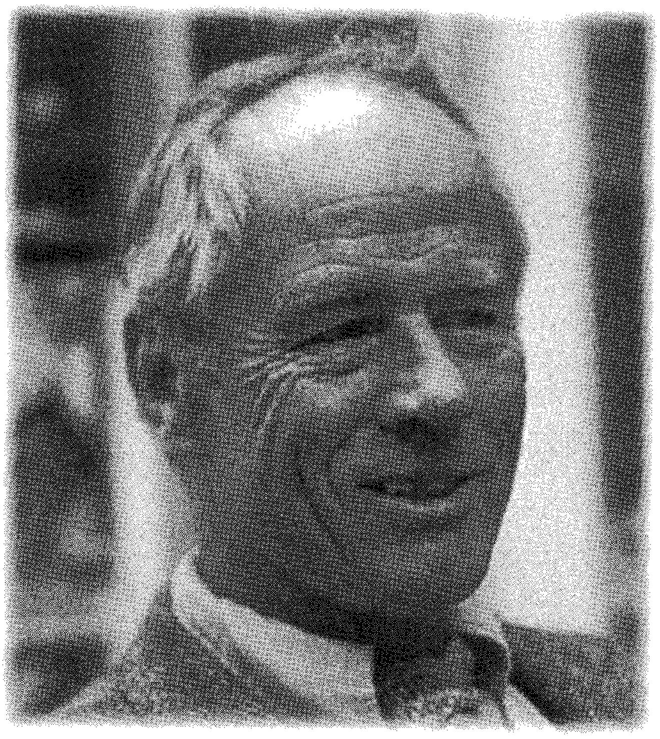

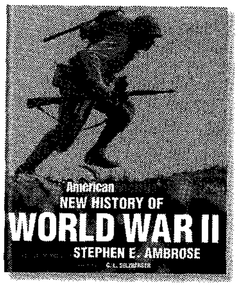
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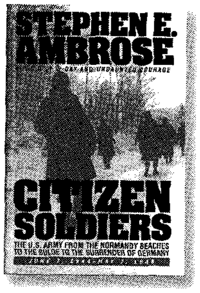
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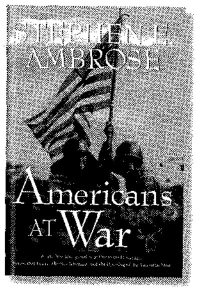
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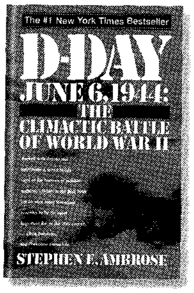
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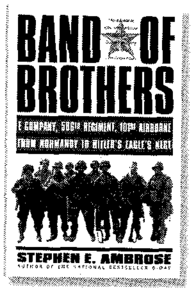
BAND OF BROTHERS
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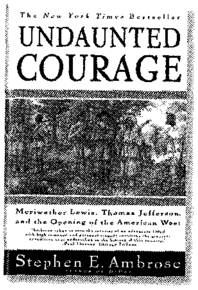
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ON AND OFF THE AVENUE: A SELECTIVE GUIDE TO HOLIDAY SHOPPING

GIFTS FOR MEN

Macy's, Herald Sq. and 34th St. (695-4400)—Gentlemen, the lunchbox has landed. . . . The one and only **REPUBLICAN LUNCHBOX** ($15,000, at Kaller's America Gallery) is a white tin metal-clasped lunchbox decorated with circus elephants and a hundred-odd Republican signatures—the Nixons, the Reagans, the Bushes, Gerald Ford, Bob Dole, Bob Hope, and so on. Should you have missed this historic artifact—or, indeed, be shopping for a Democrat—a Nissan **EXECUTIVE LUNCH TOTE** ($48), in elegant brushed steel, with its own flatware, dishes, and carrying strap, accessorizes well with pinstripes. So does a little item made to measure for the man who has jumped on the cigar bandwagon (especially if he's not on the other wagon): H. Upmann's **CIGAR HOLDER AND FLASK** ($45), a two-vice container disguised as an innocuous double-barrelled, chrome-plated penholder. Is he a Grinch who loathes the ritual of gift exchange? He's in good company. "The small package really angered me," the century's greatest thinker once wrote to a paramour. "I feel responsible for spending your earnings in such a perverted way." As the rest of this 1931 **ALBERT EINSTEIN LETTER** ($7,500) shows, he was just kidding; you can include a near-mint autographed copy of his **THEORY OF RELATIVITY** ($4,500) to prove you're not.

Barneys, 660 Madison Ave., at 61st St. (826-8900)—Keep him from ruining that executive look with a two-dollar street-corner brolly by giving him a silver-on-navy **PINSTRIPED UMBRELLA** ($110), in a long, slim, striped sheath from which the elegant handle (black leather with a silver band) protrudes. On the same floor you'll find more prosaic but utterly useful sartorial aids in the form of **SILK-KNOT CUFF LINKS** ($11) in many colors, and a baker's dozen of absorbent, white, pure-cotton **HANDKERCHIEFS** ($22). Up one flight, winter travellers can find a portable **ATLAS** ($48), a handspan in size, bound in chocolate, mustard, or black calfskin, with gold lettering.

Fountain Pen Hospital, 10 Warren St., at Broadway (964-0580)—Yet another item for the cigar bore: ten **HAVANNA CIGAR PENS** ($380), tobacco-bronze roller balls that come in metal tubes inside a wooden box, so he'll think he can smoke them. But he can't! Perfect with a raunchy four-pack of **ZIPPO-SALUTES-PIN-UP-GIRLS LIGHTERS** ($99). A gentler idea is a French **CASANOVA FOUNTAIN PEN** ($400), in ebony moiré, with curvaceous sterling-silver ring and clasp; or a hand-crafted, imperial-egg-style **MICHEL PERCHIN PEN** ($3,400), striped in twenty-two-carat gold, with green enamelling over guilloche engraving and a cabochon emerald set in the crown—only five hundred exist. Pen purists may prefer something from the huge vintage collection, like the pretty **SHEAFFER SNORKEL**, a slim, longer-than-average, bullet-ended number in muted colors ($85-$125). If choosing is agony, give him a subscription to "**VINTAGE PENS QUARTERLY**" ($10) and an I.O.U., hoping he doesn't fancy a rare **PARKER SNAKE** (around $20,000, should one turn up).

Bicycle Habitat, 244 Lafayette St., between Prince and Spring Sts. (431-3315)—You can winterize the short-distance traveller with cloven-handed Pearl Izumi **LOBSTER-CLAW GLOVES** ($55), guaranteed warm to ten degrees and available in boiled-lobster red. "Everyone's trying to imitate wool," says the shop's well-known bike guru, Hal Ruzal, "but that other stuff smells bad, so we've come full circle"—and he proves it by recommending Swobo's sleek, winter-Olympics-circa-1945 zip-turtlenecked **WOOLLEN SWEATERS** ($95) and black **TIGHTS** ($80). Pearl Izumi also makes a cute **WOOL PULLOVER** ($95), in three shades of blue, with stripes. For levity, you might add a tiger-head **CYCLE HORN** ($20), which roars when you press it and squeaks when you squeeze it. Rhino, rooster, elephant, and pig are other options, but eschew the dog horn, with its pathetic little bark.

GIFTS FOR WOMEN

Henri Bendel, 712 Fifth Ave., at 56th St. (247-1100)—A cashmere sweater has to display more than quality and softness: issues of shape, style, and color must also be addressed, and Loro Piana (Bendel's own label) **RIBBED HEAVYWEIGHT TURTLENECKS** ($398), with sleeves that brush the knuckles, do it all, and in more than a dozen colors, including just-in gray and ruby. The stocking stuffer of the season, which comes from the West Coast cosmetics innovators BeneFit, allows you to ditch your vile and waxy indelible lipstick and paint instead with **BENETINT** ($24), a reinvention of the old-fashioned carmine stain, disconcertingly housed in a nail-polish bottle. It has the fragrance of its main ingredient, rose petals, leaves lips lip-textured and lip-colored (only deeper), and doubles as blush. The *only* stocking to stuff it in is the iridescent quilted green silk **HIGH-HEELED BOOT STOCKING** ($185), hand-stitched by "couturier of the home" Michael Coffindaffer.

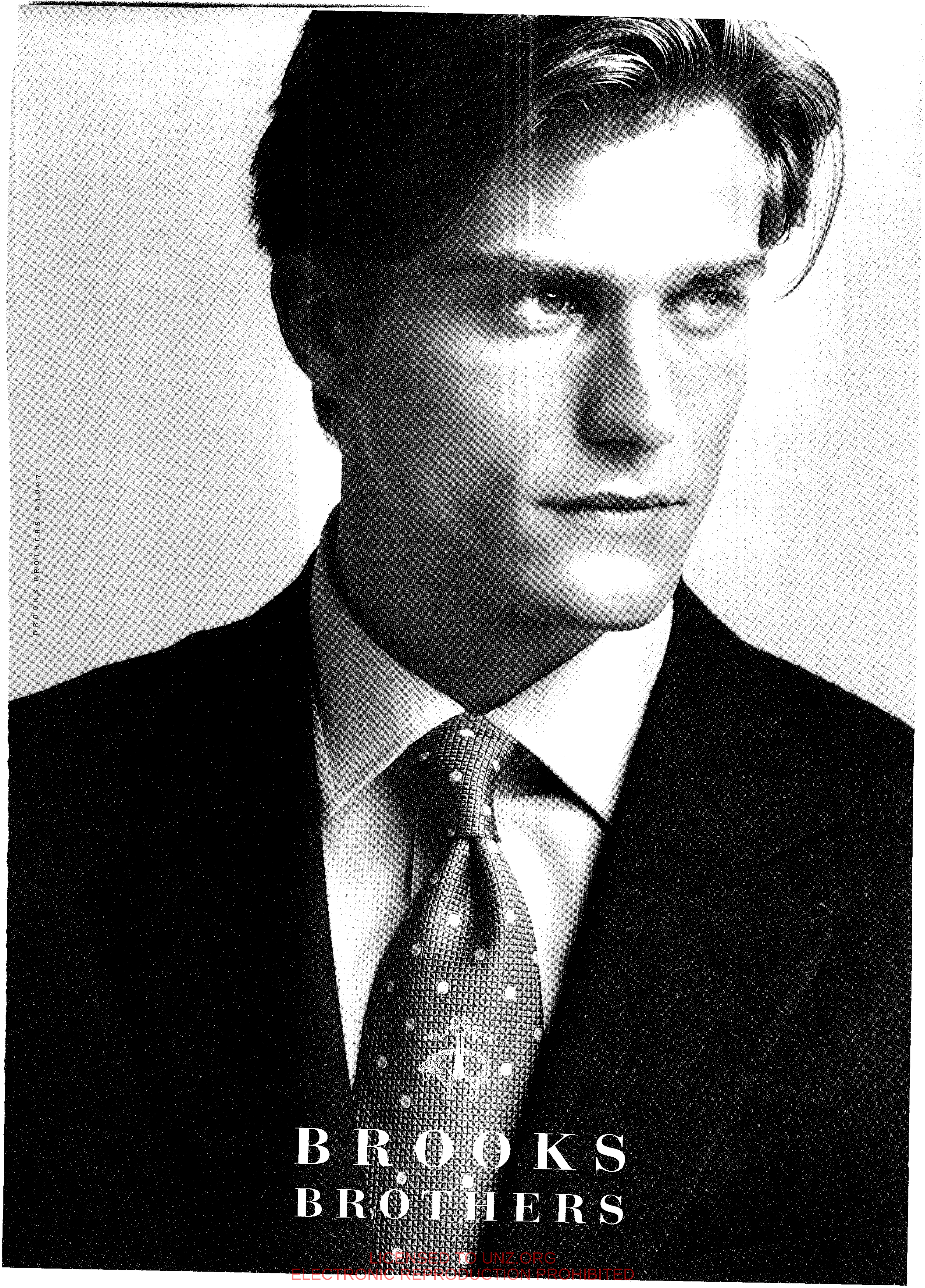
Barneys, 660 Madison Ave., at 61st St. (826-8900)—Yet more cool cosmetics appear in the Australian Poppy line. Get all **SEVEN DEADLY SINS LIPSTICKS**, in plummy earthy tones, or **INNOCENTS**, in pinky beiges ($18 each), plus a tactile, chunky Perspex pot of **SHINE** lip gloss ($18.50). Prescriptives' twelve-crayon box of **MINI LIPSTICKS** ($28) is irresistible, too. Those who have stained their lips with Decadence or Lust might also like Jill Platner's faintly macabre **BLACK-LEATHER-AND-SILVER NECKLETS** ($295-$485)—dog collars of calfskin punctuated with, say, rows of sterling staples, or an asymmetrical wishbone, or a score of seedlike silver ovals. Dries Van Noten's **SCARVES** ($180-$325), suitable for princesses of the Raj, are made of wools and silks dyed in this season's palette of rocky violets, taupes, cinnamon, and gunmetal (and sometimes printed with a shadow of paisley), richly embroidered with gold or silver thread, and edged with silken tufts. For new mothers, the Kate Spade **DIAPER BAG WITH ROLL-UP MAT** ($200) will assuage the post-partum fashion crisis.

Bergdorf Goodman, 754 Fifth Ave., at 58th St. (753-7300)—The Milan-made **SHIZUÉ HANDBAG** ($700-$960), the most lusted-after Italian item since Marcello Mastroianni, has arrived. This purse—whether in a brown calfskin flattened bucket, with top dip, zippered lip, and shoulder strap; or in New York-black briefcase guise, with a double-sleeve pocket and curved handles; or in a simple chocolate suede circle—has the rare power of a Manolo Blahnik spike heel or an Elsa Peretti silver cuff to trigger the female-accessory happiness reflex. It's about perfect construction and delicious detail (the elongated silver buckle on the strap, the soft sand-suede lining, the correct and cozy interior pockets). Jewelry is judged by similar criteria: hence the appeal of a Janis Savitt eighteen-carat **WHITE-GOLD-AND-DIAMOND CROSS** ($800), a wee half-inch cross without the longer tail of the standard Christian one, with matching **EARRINGS** ($1,060). The Pomellato counter harbors another object of desire in its solid eighteen-carat-gold **CHUNKY RING** ($1,375), in a polished or brushed finish. It's like a plain wedding band from Brobdingnag, and it's irresistible for its serious heft and understated glamour. Louder statements come from Pomellato's madly Byzantine **CABOCHON RINGS** (from $3,000), in each of which a gem—a rare rose tourmaline, a piercingly green peridot, a cloudy aquamarine—has been encased (by hand, in Italy) in a similarly weighty, curvy band of gold, perhaps punctuated with a quartet of tiny gems. In total contrast, Renee Lewis breaks up antique jewelry and strings, say, a square-cut emerald, a faceted amethyst, a cabochon citrine, a rhomboid garnet, and many more along a hair's-breadth eighteen-carat-gold chain in wonderfully delicate yet subtly funky **GEMSTONE BRACELETS** ($1,600-$3,200) and **NECKLACES** ($2,200-$6,400). Maria Pinto's vast **SILK-ORGANZA-AND-VELVET STOLE** ($915), in espresso or midnight blue, is the richest of the scarves around this year.

Saks Fifth Avenue, 611 Fifth Ave., at 50th St. (753-4000)—More for Kate Spade cultists: the feather fetish of '97 has its highest expression in her black silk-satin **FEATHER-COLLARED BUCKET BAG** ($220). Feather fanatics also have the option of 31 Fevrier's **FEATHERED EVENING BAG** ($140) engulfed completely in black or red ostrich. Saks, too, has a **BLACK-LEATHER-AND-SILVER NECKPIECE** ($265), this one braided, with a locket pendant. Wait—this isn't *like* a dog collar. It *is* a dog collar. Put her photo in the locket, for her pooch to admire.

Fountain Pen Hospital, 10 Warren St., at Broadway (964-0580)—What appears to be a beautifully impractical instrument, a spiral-striped or jewel-plain **GLASS PEN** ($17-$27), writes surprisingly smoothly. She could

MICHAEL SLOAN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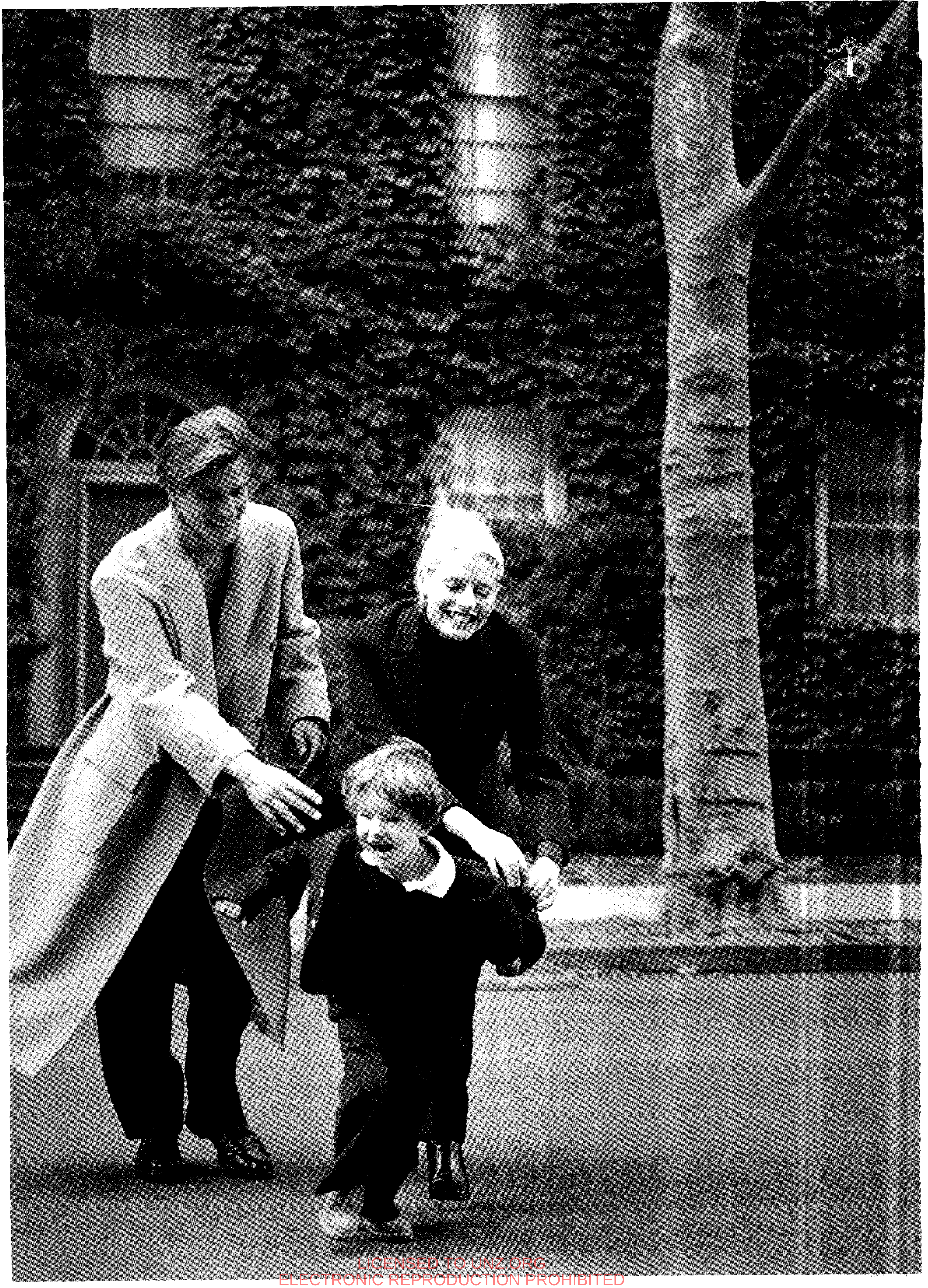

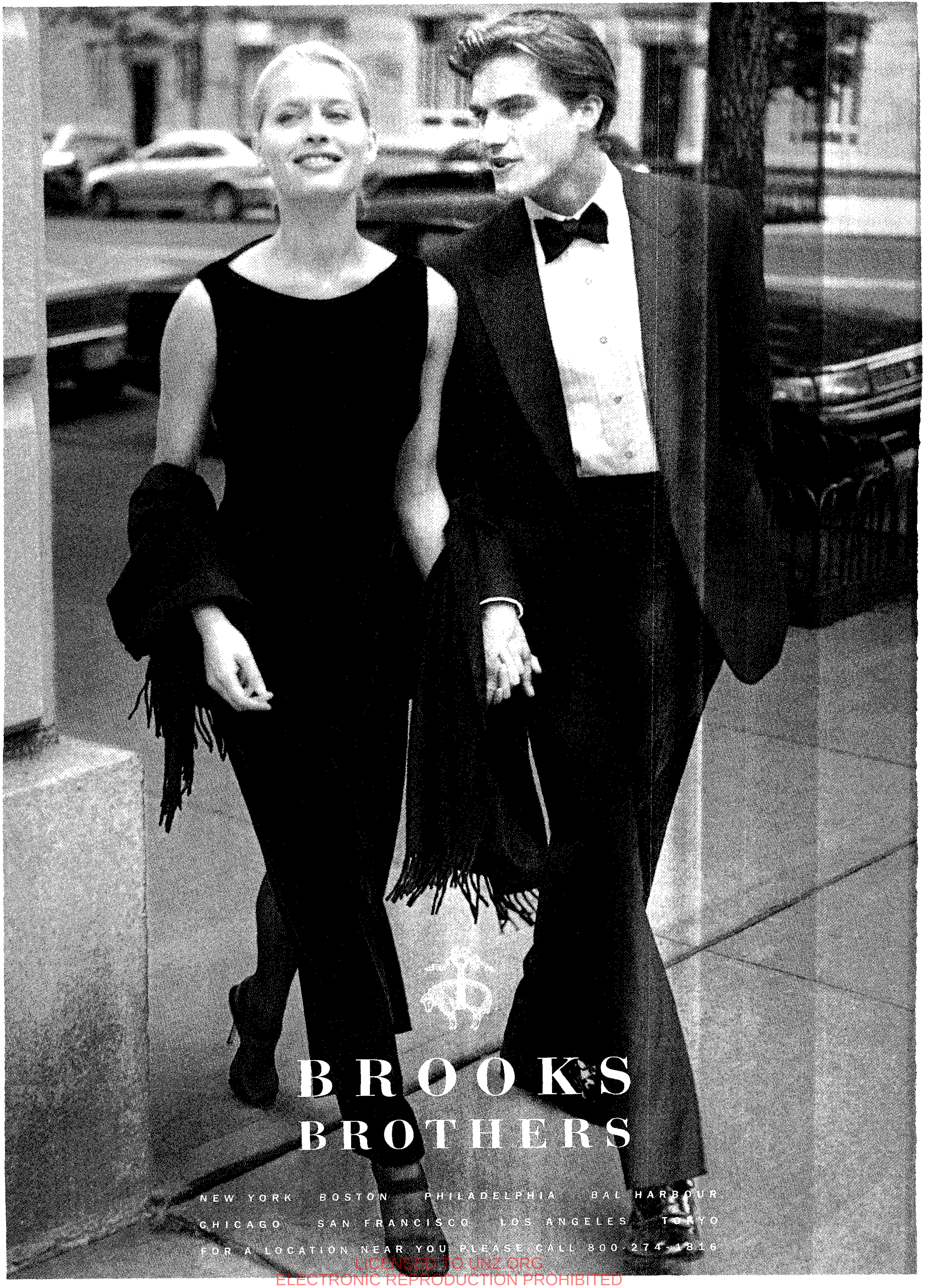BROOKS
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dip it in **INVISIBLE INK** ($10), which turns blue when the paper is warmed.

Zamir Furs, 90 W. Houston St. (677-2332)—To participate in the five-minute vogue for real fur dyed in upsetting hues without committing to a bank loan, consider a pair of **FOX OR MINK EARMUFFS** ($39) in tangerine, baby blue, soft pink, hot pink, banana yellow, leaf green, cobalt blue, pillar-box red . . . you name it. **FUR HEADBANDS** (from $99) can double as scarflets or be tailored onto collars. They sell coats here, too.

Daily 2•3•5, 235 Elizabeth St. (334-9728)—This is the home of the off-center item, where juxtaposition is all. A box of ten Choc-Aid "for life's boo-boos" **CHOCOLATE BAND-AIDS** ($4) neighbors the **STATE OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD ATLAS** ($17), which abuts an oversized olive-green bottle of Côte Bastide **BAIN DE ROSES ANCIENNES** ($40). Gift-wrap a tub of D. R. Harris (By Appointment to Her Majesty the Queen Mother) **CRYSTAL EYE GEL** ($15) with an apothecary bottle of **TRIPLE ROSEWATER** ($15) and a bottle of **PLAIN PLEASURES COLOGNE** ($15), the latter in surprisingly addictive scents—wood smoke, gentle rain, dirt, tomato—or less addictive celery and leather. Complete your package with a **VINTAGE GIFT CARD** ($3), a pack of **KISS MINT GUM** ($2.50) "for Etiquette," and an issue of the **JAPANESE "PLAYBOY"** ($8).

GIFTS FOR CHILDREN

Bloomingdale's, Lexington Ave. at 59th St. (705-2000)—This year's merchandising hopes are pinned on one of the Who's There Bears, **OSMO** ($40). Squeeze his thumb and . . . "Knock! Knock!" says Osmo, a fluffy brown bear with a permanent grin on his felt features. "Who's there?" wonders your child. "Otto!" exclaims Osmo. "Otto who?" asks Junior. And, in his best Three Stooges voice, Osmo says, "Otto know. I can't remember!" Boom chicka boom. But shhhh! Don't reveal Otto's terrible secret: whether you feed him the gag or not, he's going to deliver a punch line anyway.

Macy's, Herald Sq. and 34th St. (695-4400)—In the Cellar, near Santa's new home, a heartwarming sight: a whole rack of games you remember (or, at least, your parents do), the original interactive toys whose place was usurped by microchips—**JACKS, MARBLES,** and **JUMP ROPES** ($8 each), all boxed to go. On the sixth floor are **PILLOW BUDDIES** ($15 and $25), squashy and cheerful lion, crocodile, hippo, panda, and bear pals who enjoy overenthusiastic hugging.

Barneys, 660 Madison Ave., at 61st St. (826-8900)—In the back of the tony Home Floor hides a cache of disarmingly cute seating. The **COW STOOL** ($110), a perky upright Holstein in black-and-white plush, complete with soft horns for balance, could coexist happily with a **COWBOY ARMCHAIR** ($500) and matching **FOOTSTOOL** ($175), a handsome ensemble of undersized furniture upholstered with rodeo scenes. For the tougher child, there's a **HARLEY-DAVIDSON TRICYCLE** ($500), constructed entirely of stained wood and resembling the "Easy Rider" model. At the opposite extreme, a **ROCKING SWAN** ($500), in padded pink-and-white plush, with the princess's throne enclosed in wings and tail, is the very essence of fairy tale. You'd expect some kind of soft toys in cashmere from Barneys, and here they are: **CASHMERE BEARS** ($285) in four muted colors, with fashionable cashmere scarves and button noses.

F.A.O. Schwarz, 767 Fifth Ave., at 58th St. (644-9400)—Do not let the animal-mad Manhattan child see the life-size, lifelike **PLUSH DOGS** here, handmade in Italy by Puitré, unless you're prepared for adoption. There's everything from a three-foot **GERMAN SHEPHERD** ($500) with her **PUP** ($120) to a reclining **COCKER SPANIEL** ($160) and an ugly but sweet **PUG** ($260). Or enter the realm of real fantasy with a **LYNX** ($500). Among the board games in the overwhelming Game Reserve, **TWISTER** ($18), that hysterical contest in which humans are the playing pieces—yes, they're still making it—will rekindle your best memories of sleepovers. Kids who receive the Dr. Seuss **GREEN EGGS AND HAM GAME** ($16) are invited to play along with Sam-I-Am, who helps with reading without anybody noticing it's educational.

Kidding Around, 60 W. 15th St. (645-6337)—In Christina Clark's crammed-to-the-eaves store, you know the toy Grail must be waiting. Clark stocks the greatest hits of seasons past—like **MUFFY VANDERBEAR** ($20) and a bargain Thai-made wooden **DOLLHOUSE** ($100)—as well as the perennials (Brio, Playmobil). She has unique pieces, such as a beautiful folding leather-and-wood **WESTERN ROCKER** ($170) handmade in Costa Rica. And she's first with the best new stuff. For instance: the latest in soft toys are copied not from nature but from art. How about a subtly smiling, Renaissance-gowned **CUDDLY MONA LISA,** or a slightly wobbly-edged, colorful knockoff of van Gogh's **ROULIN THE POSTMAN** ($29 each)? Already walking off the shelves are **MAKE-YOUR-OWN-CHEWING-GUM KITS** ($11.50)—with **MAKE-YOUR-OWN-GUMMIES KITS** ($11.50) also available—and there's a great junior contractor's **TOOL-BELT SET** ($45), with a real suede belt, a dangerous-looking hammer, a ten-foot Little Powertape, and a genuine spirit level. Clark's retro **VENTRILOQUIST'S DUMMIES** ($47-$52), made in the image of clowns kids don't know (like Howdy Doody and Laurel and Hardy), are a surprise. And the kits containing cookie cutters, a rolling pin, and four smells of **SCENTED PLAY-DOH** ($16) are absolute favorites.

GIFTS FOR THE HOUSE

Henri Bendel, 712 Fifth Ave., at 56th St. (247-1100)—"Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes," said this year's favorite rebel, and now you can eat his words, from an English **OSCAR WILDE DINNER PLATE** ($32). The "I have nothing to declare except my genius in conversation" **SALAD PLATE** ($28) is also available, plus, naturally, the "I can resist everything except temptation" **MARTINI GLASS** ($36.50). For those who prefer their liquor simpler, there's a terrific bargain **VODKA SET** ($35), with six shot glasses nestled in a heavy-bottomed ice bowl looking like a splayed-out seventh glass.

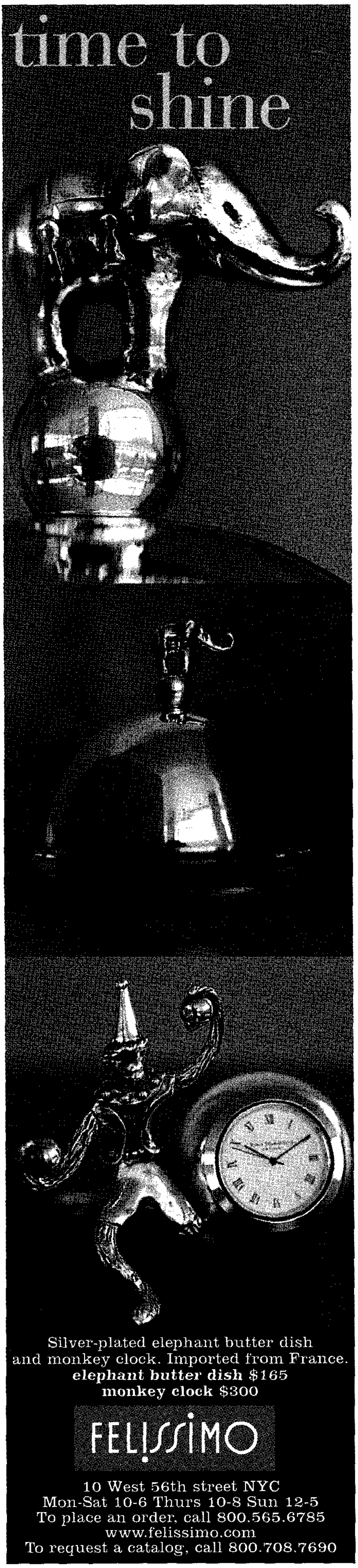
Bloomingdale's, Lexington Ave. at 59th St. (705-2000)—Leave it to Bloomie's to carry wild **ZEBRA-STRIPED AND LEOPARD-SPOTTED TEAPOTS** ($39), for jazzing up the hot beverage. You can brew up a pot and then consult Brother's compact computer, the **KITCHEN ASSISTANT** ($300), for the ultimate pound-cake recipe; this mechanical sous chef comes complete with cooking cassettes and fits easily on a countertop. While sipping your tea, wind up the **NEW YORK SNOW GLOBE** ($35), a really silly item that plays "New York, New York" while the No. 6 train runs around a tiny track and snow settles over miniature twin towers, the Chrysler and Empire State Buildings, the Guggenheim, et al.

Art Student Showcase, 248 Lafayette St., between Prince and Spring Sts. (941-9471)—One day, Paul Toner woke up to the pool of painterly talent studying in this city. He contacted the directors of all the art schools, and, as he puts it, "After I'd interviewed five hundred students, I stopped counting." He narrowed them down to a cream of forty, and their work is now crammed onto every wall of this three-month-old storefront business. Toner marginally favors figurative work, but there's a range of approach on display, including pieces by many a commissionable portraitist. Spot future stars, or just buy what you love, for $60 to $2,400.

Mood Indigo, 181 Prince St. (254-1176)—Hunters and collectors are probably familiar with Diane Petipas's crammed palace of twenties to fifties ceramics, glass, and Bakelite. It offers everything from a **CHARTREUSE FIESTAWARE COFFEEPOT** ($475—oh dear, that's the rarest color) to a bewildering museum of wacky **SALT AND PEPPER SHAKERS** (from $18)—mermaids, winsome alligators, a salt mitt and pepper baseball. Cocktail-era nostalgists are especially well served here, with such artifacts as six dinky smoke-gray **RUSSEL WRIGHT COCKTAIL GLASSES** ($110), a 1939 New York World's Fair **TIFFANY PLATE** ($385), or a giant **STORK CLUB MATCHBOOK** ($65).

SoHo Provisions, 518 Broadway, at Spring St., second floor. (334-4311)—A **FOOD BASKET** ($25-$350) is always exciting when Hara Viner, the owner of this least expensive and most adventurous of New York's food museums, makes it up. Among the other gorgeously packaged items on the geographically arranged shelves of her loftlike store: ceramic bottles of intense French Press **TOASTED NUT OILS** ($15); some twenty-five **EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OILS** ($6-$35); a Jamaican cottage industry, Walker's Wood **ONE-STOP JERK SAUCE** ($2.79); Persian **BERGAMOT JAM** ($5.75); Italian **CHESTNUT CREAM** ($7); Syrian **DRIED-APRICOT SHEETS** ($3); and imperial tins of Russian **KOUSMICHOFF TEA** ($8.25). Then there are the Turkish **DRIED EGGPLANTS** ($1.99/dozen), the Egyptian **PICKLED LEMONS** ($4.59/lb), the famous **SALTED CAPERS** from Pantelleria ($24.99/lb), and—just in—the world's best **WILD SAFFRON** ($6.95/g), harvested for only three weeks each year by the women of the Tuareg, or Blue People, in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. For the most personalized and unpredictable foodie gift in town, provide Viner with biographical details (hates to cook, loves curry and sushi; lives in a studio, is a vegan) and a price limit, and await your dinner invitation.

MICHAEL SLOAN



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THE MOVIES

OPENING THIS WEEK

How I Spent My Summer Vacation—Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening Nov. 19.

John Grisham's The Rainmaker—Matt Damon stars as a young lawyer on his first case, in Francis Ford Coppola's adaptation of the 1995 Grisham novel. With Danny DeVito, Claire Danes, and Jon Voight. Opening Nov. 21. (East 85th Street.)

Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil—Clint Eastwood directs John Cusack and Kevin Spacey in a film version of John Berendt's 1994 book about a murder in Savannah. Opening Nov. 21. (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Mortal Kombat: Annihilation—The further adventures of the martial-arts action heroes. Directed by John Leonetti. Opening Nov. 21.

The Sweet Hereafter—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 21. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Alice (1988)—The Czech animator Jan Švankmajer plays with objects the way Lewis Carroll played with words. He animates household items and worn-looking dolls, makes nonsense physical, palpable, and thus gives Alice's adventures in illogic an undertone of menace. The director—a self-described "militant Surrealist," who has been making short films since 1964—brings a pessimistic, absurdist, Eastern European sensibility to bear on Carroll's material, and his approach sometimes seems overly formal, a little rigid. But this is an extraordinary piece of work—a brilliant demonstration of the connection between a child's imagination and the lonely, obsessive craftsmanship of a great animator.—*Terrence Rafferty* (Walter Reade Theatre; Nov. 22-23.)

Anastasia—An animated musical directed by Don Bluth and Gary Goldman, about the discovery of the long-lost Russian princess. With the voices of Meg Ryan, John Cusack, Angela Lansbury, Christopher Lloyd, and Hank Azaria. (Ziegfeld.)

Basic Training (1971)—This wrenching chronicle of how the U.S. Army militarized young men in the Vietnam era is one of Frederick Wiseman's most dramatically cohesive and visually arresting documentaries. The officers and drill instructors at Fort Knox, Kentucky, link war-readiness with sports, phallic prowess, and manhood itself. The movie isn't dehumanized; it's about dehumanization. The sequence in which a suicidal recruit seeks counsel from a homiletic chaplain is as piercing as any in the Wiseman canon.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum 2; Nov. 20.)

Bean—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII. . . . ¶ 72nd Street East; through Nov. 20.)

Boogie Nights—Mark Wahlberg (once better known as Marky Mark) is a busboy who becomes the most successful product of the porn producer Jack Horner, played with a rangy bantam cock's swagger by Burt Reynolds. Wahlberg, who plays his part with baffled sweetness, is surrounded by the most interesting ensemble cast since "The Player," including William H. Macy, Julianne Moore, and Heather Graham. The picture is set in Los Angeles in the late seventies and early eighties, and, in the hands of the talented young director Paul Thomas Anderson, it gradually takes on the feel of a "Nashville"-like epic.—*Daphne Merkin* (10/13/97) (Cinema I, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

Bringing Up Baby (1938)—Lunatic comedies of the thirties generally started with an heiress. This one starts with an heiress (Katherine Hepburn) who has a dog, George, and a leopard, Baby. Cary Grant is a paleontologist who has just acquired the bone he needs to complete his dinosaur skeleton. George steals the bone, Grant and Baby chase each other around, the dinosaur collapses—but Grant winds up with Hepburn, and no paleontologist ever got hold of a more beautiful set of bones. The director, Howard Hawks, keeps all this trifling nonsense in such artful balance that it never impinges on the real world; it may be the American movies' closest equivalent to Restoration comedy.—*Pauline Kael* (Whitney Museum; Nov. 23.)

Bugis Street—A Singapore brothel in the late sixties specializing in transvestites and transsexuals is the setting for this drama directed by Yonfan. (Village East Cinemas.)

The Devil's Advocate—Keanu Reeves's blank acting style finds a fun, trashy vehicle in this thriller about a callow young Florida lawyer recruited to work at a Manhattan law firm run by Satan (Al Pacino, gamely parodying his shouting act from "Scent of a Woman"). The film's ridiculous premise is partly redeemed by wit, and its denunciation of modern evil—found in tabloid TV, rampant plastic surgery, greedy yuppies, and the jury-rigging enablers we call lawyers—is surprisingly sincere. Directed by Taylor Hackford.—*Sarah Kerr* (Astor Plaza, 84th Street Sixplex, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

Eve's Bayou—For her first film, the writer and director Kasi Lemmons attempts to adapt Tennessee Williams's Southern-gothic style to an African-American context. Eve, the heroine (Jurnee Smollett), a ten-year-old bourgeois Creole in late-fifties rural Louisiana, is trying to understand why her mother (an intense, elegant Lynn Whitfield) is so frigid and why her beloved father (a subdued Samuel L. Jackson) is addicted to fooling around. Smollett has a pouty naturalness, and as long as the film sticks to Eve's point of view it's got a naïve charm. Unfortunately, Lemmons doesn't stop there: she mixes in Magic Realist fantasies of African voodoo, and she interrupts the story with black-and-white sequences that feel less poetic than arty.—*S.K.* (First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, State, and Waverly.)

Fast, Cheap & Out of Control—Errol Morris has made another unclassifiable documentary. This time around he focusses on a lion tamer, a topiary gardener, a mole-rat expert, and an M.I.T. robotics scientist, interweaving interviews with his eccentric but remarkably unkooky subjects with stock footage, old movies, and cartoons. The result is an alternately comic and haunting meditation.—*D.M.* (Film Forum 3.)

The Full Monty—An amiable light comedy, directed by Peter Cattaneo, about six unemployed British steelworkers who mount an all-male strip show for cash. The script, by Simon Beaufoy, is clean and well developed. Each character is given his bit to do, and when the motley crew comes together the actors all work wonderfully with one another, finding a sexy, warm performance rhythm as they gyrate to some classic seventies disco. Two actors—Mark Addy, who plays an overweight, insecure worker, and Robert Carlyle, as the ringleader—are sensational.—*Bruce Diones* (Angelika Film Center, Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Murray Hill Cinemas.)

Gattaca—A quiet, down-to-earth science-fiction drama about a future in which genetically engineered people get all the great jobs. Ethan Hawke plays a young man who swaps his genetic code with the superior-gened Jude Law and tries to pass himself off as a member of the élite. The murder-mystery plot moves along predictably; apparently, it, too, has been engineered. What makes the film distinctive is writer-director Andrew Niccol's cold, Antonioni-like vision of the future. With Uma Thurman.—*B.D.* (86th Street East Twin, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

Habit—Larry Fessenden wrote, directed, and stars in a thriller about a man whose mysterious new lover (Meredith Snaider) may or may not be a vampire. (Cinema Village.)

Happy Together—The Hong Kong filmmaker Wong Kar-Wai's latest effort—a Buenos Aires love story gone wrong, starring two of Hong Kong's sexiest leading men, Tony Leung Chiu-Wai and Leslie Cheung Kwok-Wing—is an intoxicating blend of glossy nighttime visuals and loose melodramatic narrative that would give Douglas Sirk pause. Wong's erotic style strands his troubled characters in a romantic cul-de-sac. The film is a rare achievement, so drenched in melancholy it can make an audience swoon. In Cantonese and Mandarin.—*B.D.* (Quad Cinema.)

High School (1969)—What we see in Fred Wiseman's documentary, shot in a high school in a large Eastern city, is so familiar and so extraordinarily evocative that a feeling of empathy with the students floods over us. How did we live through it? How did we keep any spirit?—*P.K.* (Film Forum 2; Nov. 20.)

How I Spent My Summer Vacation—A sweet, slightly derivative comic look at dating among African-Americans, starring RonReaco Lee and Deanna Davis as a couple of college students who love each other but fight constantly. The young writer and director, John Fisher, is not as distinctive a talent as Woody Allen or Spike Lee, two filmmakers who have obviously influenced his quips about the war between the sexes. On the plus side, Fisher's jokes are tender, generous, and refreshingly free of his forebears' misogyny and self-love. And he has put together a likable Atlanta-based cast. RonReaco Lee, as the immature and still selfish hero, is especially promising—a handsome actor who's not above playing the buffoon.—*S.K.* (Film Forum; starting Nov. 19.)

The Ice Storm—Ang Lee's treatment of Rick Moody's novel about suburban anomie is intelligent but curiously remote. Set in New Canaan, Connecticut, in 1973, it focusses on two troubled families, and it benefits from Lee's gently ironic touch: he's less interested in assigning blame for all the misery than in simply documenting the way it spreads and gets absorbed. With Kevin Kline, Joan Allen, Sigourney Weaver, and, among the adolescents, Elijah Wood and Christina Ricci.—*D.M.* (9/29/97) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Jackal—An international thriller that makes Brian De Palma's 1996 "Mission: Impossible" look cogent and exciting. It's loosely based on the 1973 classic "The Day of the Jackal": Bruce Willis is the villainous master of disguises out to assassinate an important political figure, Richard Gere an imprisoned I.R.A. terrorist (his accent is better than Brad Pitt's in "The Devil's Own") brought in to track him down. As directed by Michael Caton-Jones, the movie follows Willis's assassin around the globe without much suspense or many surprises. Though Gere is game, Willis barely registers: while it's interesting to see him as an unrepentant bad guy for a change, he brings none of his usual engaging irony to the role. His character is humorless, and so is this dryly competent film.—*B.D.* (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea West, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, National Twin, and Orpheum VII.)

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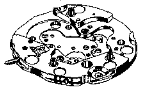
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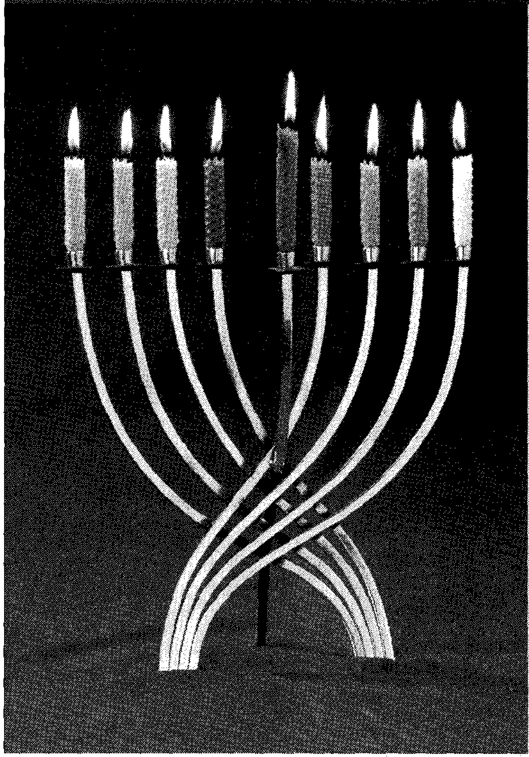
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Opening November 23: ***Assignment: Rescue, The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee***

Kiss or Kill—An outback thriller by the Australian writer-director Bill Bennett, about criminal lovers (Matt Day and Frances O'Connor) who start to suspect each other of the murders committed around them while they're on the run. The two stars pull off a seductive con as they keep the audience guessing about their characters. (O'Connor is amazing—she has the trembly theatrical spark of a Jessica Lange.) The film isn't much more than a bunch of vignettes strung together, but they benefit from Bennett's spare style. He and his actors expertly navigate the twists and turns of the road-movie genre, bringing this eerie example to a witty and satisfying conclusion.—*B.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

L.A. Confidential—Curtis Hanson's new thriller, set in Los Angeles in the early fifties, is about a group of cops who between them cover the full moral range, from the uptight integrity of Ed Exley (Guy Pearce) to the four-star sadism of Bud White (Russell Crowe). The plot, adapted from the James Ellroy novel, is both murky and tangled, yet the movie never bogs down. Hanson paces the tale with ease, decorating it with one neat performance after another: James Cromwell as the smiling police chief, David Strathairn as an oily pimp, Kim Basinger as one of his prize charges, and, better still, Kevin Spacey as a "celebrity crime-stopper" who gets dragged into the dark and dirty.—*Anthony Lane* (9/22/97) (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Leopard (1963)—Magnificent—a sweeping popular epic, with obvious similarities to "Gone with the Wind," and with an almost Chekhovian sensibility. Based on the novel by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, an impoverished Sicilian prince, it has a hero on a grand scale—Don Fabrizio, Prince of Salina, played superlatively by Burt Lancaster, who has acknowledged that he modelled his performance on the nobleman director, Luchino Visconti. The film is set in the 1860s, when Italy was in the middle of a revolution, but it's essentially about the Prince himself—the aging Leopard—and how he reacts to the social changes. We see what he sees, feel what he feels, and, in the last hour, set at a splendid ball that marks the aristocrats' acceptance of the Mafia-dominated parvenus who are taking over their wealth and power, we're inside his mind as he relives his life, experiences regret, and accepts the dying of his class and his own death. It's one of the greatest of all passages in movies. With Alain Delon, Claudia Cardinale, Paolo Stoppa, Rina Morelli, and Pierre Clementi. In Italian.—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 21.)

The Little Mermaid (1989)—Disney-style kitsch. It's technologically sophisticated, but with just about all the simpering old Disney values in place. They're just slightly updated: the Little Mermaid—a teen-age tootsie in a flirty seashell bra—is like Sleeping Beauty plus tomboy spunk. The film does have a cheerful calypso number ("Under the Sea," by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken), and the color is bright—at least, until the mermaid goes on land, when everything seems to dull out.—*P.K.* (Cinema II, 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 2, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)

Mad City—Another polemical thriller from the director Costa-Gavras; this time his target—not exactly hard to hit—is the modern media. John Travolta plays a fired museum guard who returns, with a shotgun, to discuss the matter with his boss (Blythe Danner); within minutes, a quarrel has boomed into a crisis, with a down-at-heel TV reporter (Dustin Hoffman), seeing his chance to take center stage on network television, as a more than enthusiastic hostage. The satire never really bites: Costa-Gavras refuses to let Hoffman off the leash, and toward the end his character is even forced to see the error of his ways. How can a movie so indebted to melodrama have the gall to sneer at the bad habits of television? With Alan Alda as—surprise, surprise—an oily anchorman.—*A.L.* (11/17/97) (Chelsea Cinema, Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Man Who Knew Too Little—A comedy in which an American in London (Bill Murray) becomes unwittingly (and obliviously) involved in an espionage caper. Directed by Jon Amiel. (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

One Night Stand—Writer-director Mike Figgis's exploration of the consequences of a brief encounter. With Wesley Snipes, Nastassja Kinski, Robert Downey, Jr., Ming-Na Wen, and Kyle MacLachlan. (Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

At MOMA, a program of films directed by Luchino Visconti.

TULLIO PERICOLI

Red Corner—Jon Avnet's thriller stars Richard Gere as an entertainment attorney in China who must prove he did not commit murder. (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, National Twin, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Starship Troopers—Hollywood is making war movies again, and this one has an early lead as the worst of them. A futuristic, overproduced version of the fifties flicks in which giant insects wage war on mankind, it's energetic and loud, with some extraordinary computer bug work by the special-effects master Phil Tippett ("Jurassic Park"). But Paul Verhoeven has directed it with a bludgeon and cast it with actor-models whose soap-opera dialogue suggests "Melrose Place Goes to War." The look is battleship-gray Styrofoam with cafeteria lighting, and this flatness lends the whole expensive enterprise a numbing, fascistic feel. (In 1979, Verhoeven made a vastly superior war drama, "Soldier of Orange.")—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Tango Lesson—The writer-director Sally Potter is also the star of this story about a film director captivated by the tango and by her teacher (the dancer Pablo Veron). (Angelika Film Center and Regency.)

Washington Square—With its dark interiors, ticking clocks, and buttoned-up style, this film by Agnieszka Holland ("The Secret Garden") can't be faulted for not being true to the spirit of Henry James. Holland has yanked everything up a tonal notch from "The Heiress," William Wyler's cold and gleaming 1949 version, to accentuate the dissolving ironies of the story; she is good at underlining the emotional and physical discomfort of the hoodwinked heiress Catherine Sloper (Jennifer Jason Leigh, looking irredeemably plain and acting suitably clumsy), and the sleekly ingratiating ways of the fortune seeker Morris Townsend (Ben Chaplin). But in the end Holland's interpretation of James's vision seems less profound than arbitrarily dismal, as though someone had decided to gaze at life through brown lenses and then wondered bitterly why the color had gone out of everything.—*D.M.* (Paris.)

White Nights (1957)—Luchino Visconti, conjuring up Livorno in the Cinecittà studio, wrests visual poetry from that city's winding streets and canals in his uneven yet touching adaptation of Dostoyevsky's story. The film accumulates strength from the simple force of the central concept: a lonely man (Marcello Mastroianni) meets the woman of his dreams (Maria Schell), only to discover that she's pining for the man of *her* dreams (Jean Marais). Mastroianni is wonderful as a modest fellow who pushes beyond his limits in pursuit of love; he externalizes every bit of the character's doting alertness and jealousy, especially in a funny, nerve-racking scene in which he draws his date's attention away from a wiry rock-and-roller by doing his own slapstick jitterbug (to Bill Haley's "Thirteen Women"). The final sequences soar to those operatic heights that Visconti negotiated better than anyone, peaking when snow drapes the tormented heroine in white. Despite lapses in pace, tone, and casting, the movie is a showcase both for Mastroianni and for Visconti's simultaneously baroque and limpid style. In Italian—*M.S.* (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 23.)

The Wings of the Dove—The director Iain Softley's decision to move the action of Henry James's magisterial late novel up eight years, to 1910, was a good one: the London Underground had just been completed, and it's a pleasure to watch the penniless Kate Croy (Helena Bonham Carter) bump into her lover, the muckraking journalist Merton Densher (Linus Roache), on a crowded subway car rather than suffer the conversational longueurs of a Merchant Ivory-style drawing room. But what starts out as a jazzy, confident effort gets a bit sluggish with the entrance of Milly Theale (Alison Elliott), the rich, good-hearted American orphan whom Kate persuades Densher to seduce in order to secure their future together. Elliott, an ex-model, doesn't have the depth to convey Milly's galvanizing goodness, which is the key to everything that does—and doesn't—happen in James's story, and this deficiency threatens to undo the film, despite its glorious costumes and all that golden Venice light.—*D.M.* (11/10/97) (Angelika Film Center, Beekman, and Lincoln Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

BEAUMARCHAIS, THE SCOUNDREL: Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **CONSPIRACY THEORY** (reviewed in our issue of 8/18/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **COP LAND** (8/18/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **CRITICAL CARE:** 59th Street East Cinema. . . . **THE EDGE:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **EVENT HORIZON:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **FAIRY TALE: A TRUE STORY:** East 85th Street and Guild. . . . **THE GAME:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE HOUSE OF YES:** The Screening Room and 62nd & Broadway. . . . **I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **IN & OUT:** Embassy 4 and Sutton. . . . **IN SEARCH OF THE DREAM:** Embassy 3. . . . **KISS THE GIRLS** (10/13/97): First & 62nd Cinemas and State. . . . **A LIFE LESS ORDINARY** (11/3/97): Angelika Film Center. . . . **MRS. BROWN** (8/4/97): Eastside Playhouse. . . . **THE MOUSE:** Quad Cinema. . . . **NICK AND JANE:** Sutton. . . . **PICTURE PERFECT:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **PLAYING GOD:** Gotham Cinema. . . . **SHALL WE DANCE?:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and The Screening Room. . . . **SICK: THE LIFE AND DEATH OF BOB FLANAGAN, SUPERMASOCHIST:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **SLAVES OF THE UNDERGROUND:** Quad Cinema. . . . **SWITCHBACK:** Embassy 1.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Nov. 19: "Ali: The Fighter" (1971, William Greaves). . . . Nov. 20: "High School" (†) and Basic Training" (†). . . . Nov. 21: "On the Road with Duke Ellington" (1967, Robert Drew and Mike Jackson), "Mingus" (1968, Thomas Reichman), and "Lambert & Co." (1964, D. A. Pennebaker). . . . Nov. 22: "Primary" (1960, Drew) and "Crisis: Behind a Presidential Commitment" (1963, Drew). . . . Nov. 23-24: "What's Happening! The Beatles in the U.S.A." (1964, Albert and David Maysles), "A Happy Mother's Day" (1963, Richard Leacock and Joyce Chopra), and "Hickory Hill" (1968, Leacock). . . . Nov. 25: "The Guilty Generation" (1931, Rowland V. Lee) and "Brief Moment" (1933, David Burton).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Nov. 20 at 2:30: "Girl with Hyacinths" (1950, Hasse Ekman; in Swedish). . . . ¶ Nov. 20 at 6: "Tempest" (1982, Paul Mazursky). . . . ¶ Nov. 20 at 6:30 and Nov. 21 at 3: "Walled City Stories" (1996) and "Tales from the Heights" (1995). . . . ¶ A series of films directed by Luchino Visconti; in Italian, with English subtitles. Nov. 21 at 2:30 and Nov. 24 at 6: "Ossessione" (1942). . . . Nov. 21 at 6:30: "The Leopard" (†). . . . Nov. 22 at 2: "The Earth Trembles" (1948). . . . Nov. 22 at 5: "Bellissima" (1951). . . . Nov. 23 at 2: "Senso" (1954). . . . Nov. 23 at 5: "White Nights" (†). . . . Nov. 24 at 2:30: "Days of Glory" (1945). . . . Nov. 25 at 2:30: "Rocco and His Brothers" (1960). . . . Nov. 25 at 6: "We, the Women" (1953), "The Witches" (1967), and "The Job" (1962). . . . ¶ Nov. 21 at 7: "Front Page Woman" (1935, Michael Curtiz). . . . ¶ Nov. 22 at 2:30: "Hands Up!" (1926, Clarence Badger; silent). . . . ¶ Nov. 22 at 5: "Old Ironsides" (1926, James Cruze; silent). . . . ¶ Nov. 23 at 2:30: "3 Bad Men" (1926, John Ford; silent). . . . ¶ Nov. 25 at 6: "Tiananmen Square, Part I—The Old City" and "Tiananmen Square, Part VII—On the Way" (1991, Shi Jian and Chen Jue).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of films directed by Andrei Konchalovsky. Nov. 19 at 2 and 6:15 and Nov. 20 at 4:15 and 9: "Duet for One" (1986). . . . Nov. 19 at 4: "Maria's Lovers" (1984). . . . Nov. 19 at 8:15 and Nov. 20 at 2: "Shy People" (1987). . . . ¶ Nov. 20 at 6:30: "Rubber Jungle" (1997, Bill Day). . . . ¶ A program of films by Jan Švankmajer. Nov. 21 at 2 and 6 and Nov. 22 at 6: Eight short films, 1964-83. . . . Nov. 21 at 4 and 8, Nov. 22 at 8, and Nov. 23 at 6: Nine short films, 1965-92. . . . Nov. 21-22 at 10: "Conspirators of Pleasure" (1996). . . . Nov. 22 at 4 and Nov. 23 at 4 and 8: "Alice" (†). . . . ¶ Nov. 22-23 at 2: "The Emperor's Nightingale" (1948, Jiří Trnka).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Nov. 22 at 1: "Alien" (1979, Ridley Scott). . . . Nov. 22 at 3:30: "Aliens" (1986, James Cameron). . . . Nov. 22 at 6: "Alien^{3}" (1992, David Fincher). . . . Nov. 23 at 2: "Alien Resurrection" (1997, Jean-Pierre Jeunet).

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—Nov. 25 at 7: "Mississippi Mermaid" (1969, François Truffaut; in French). . . . Nov. 25 at 9:15: "La Chienne" (1931, Jean Renoir; in French).

From Paris to Hollywood—The Alliance Française presents a series of French films (shown in Florence Gould Hall) alongside the American films based on them (shown in Tinker Auditorium). Nov. 25 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "And God Created Woman" (1956, Roger Vadim), with Brigitte Bardot. . . . Nov. 25 at 6:15 and 8:45: "And God Created Woman" (1988, Vadim), with Rebecca DeMornay. (Both at 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160.)

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Nov. 23 at 7, the feature will be "Flashdance" (1983, Adrian Lyne).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Nov. 19 at 11:30: "Artists and Models" (1937, Raoul Walsh). . . . Nov. 19 at 1:30: "Artists and Models Abroad" (1938, Mitchell Leisen). . . . Nov. 19 at 3:30: "Roberta" (1935, William A. Seiter). . . . Nov. 20 at 2 and Nov. 21-22 at 3: "Vogues of 1938" (1937, Irving Cummings). . . . Nov. 20 at 5:30 and Nov. 21-22 at noon: "The Women" (1939, Howard Hawks). . . . Nov. 23 at noon: "Bringing Up Baby" (†). . . . Nov. 23 at 3: "Gilda" (1946, Charles Vidor).

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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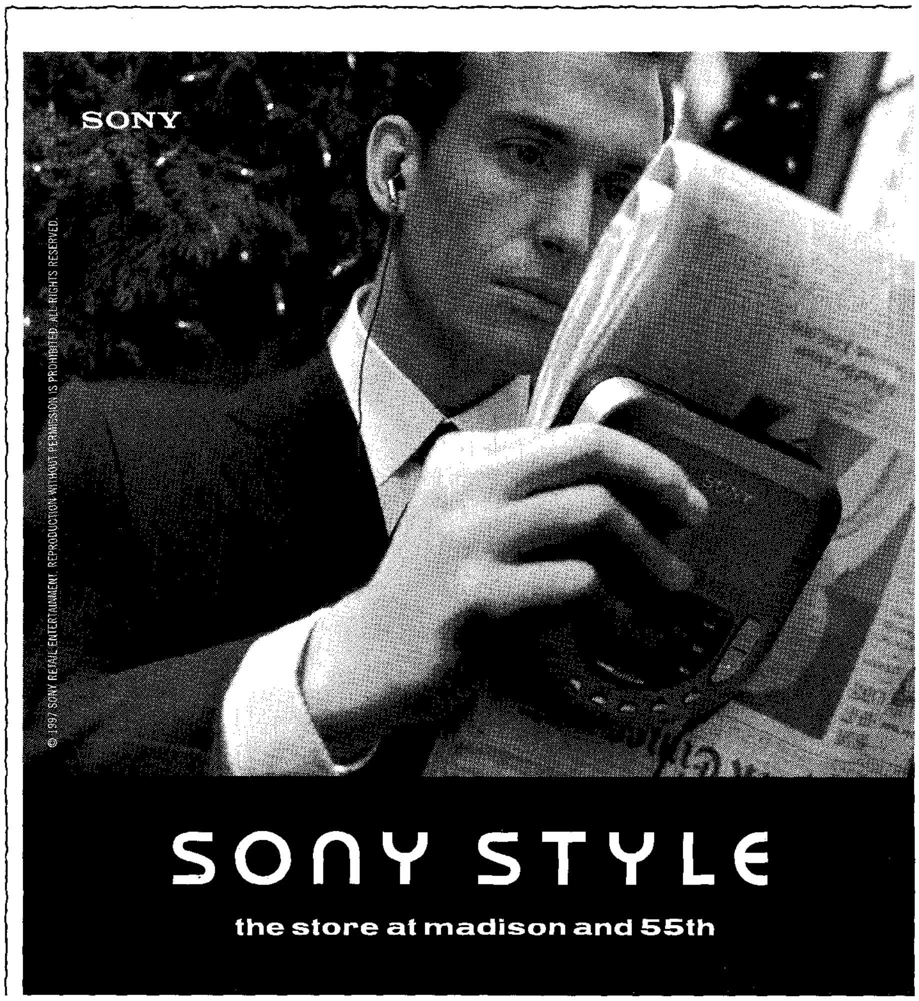
(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy 1, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.



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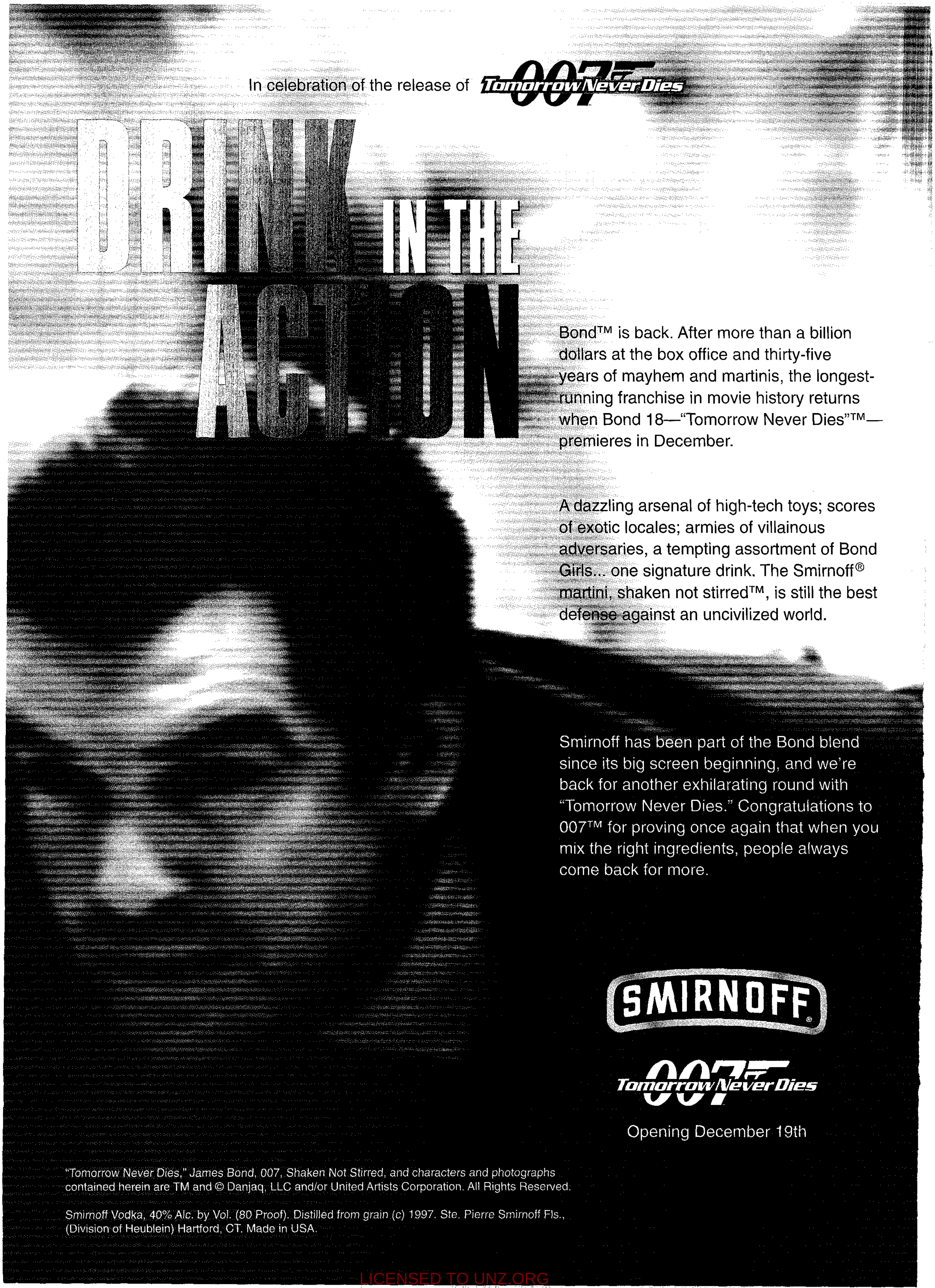

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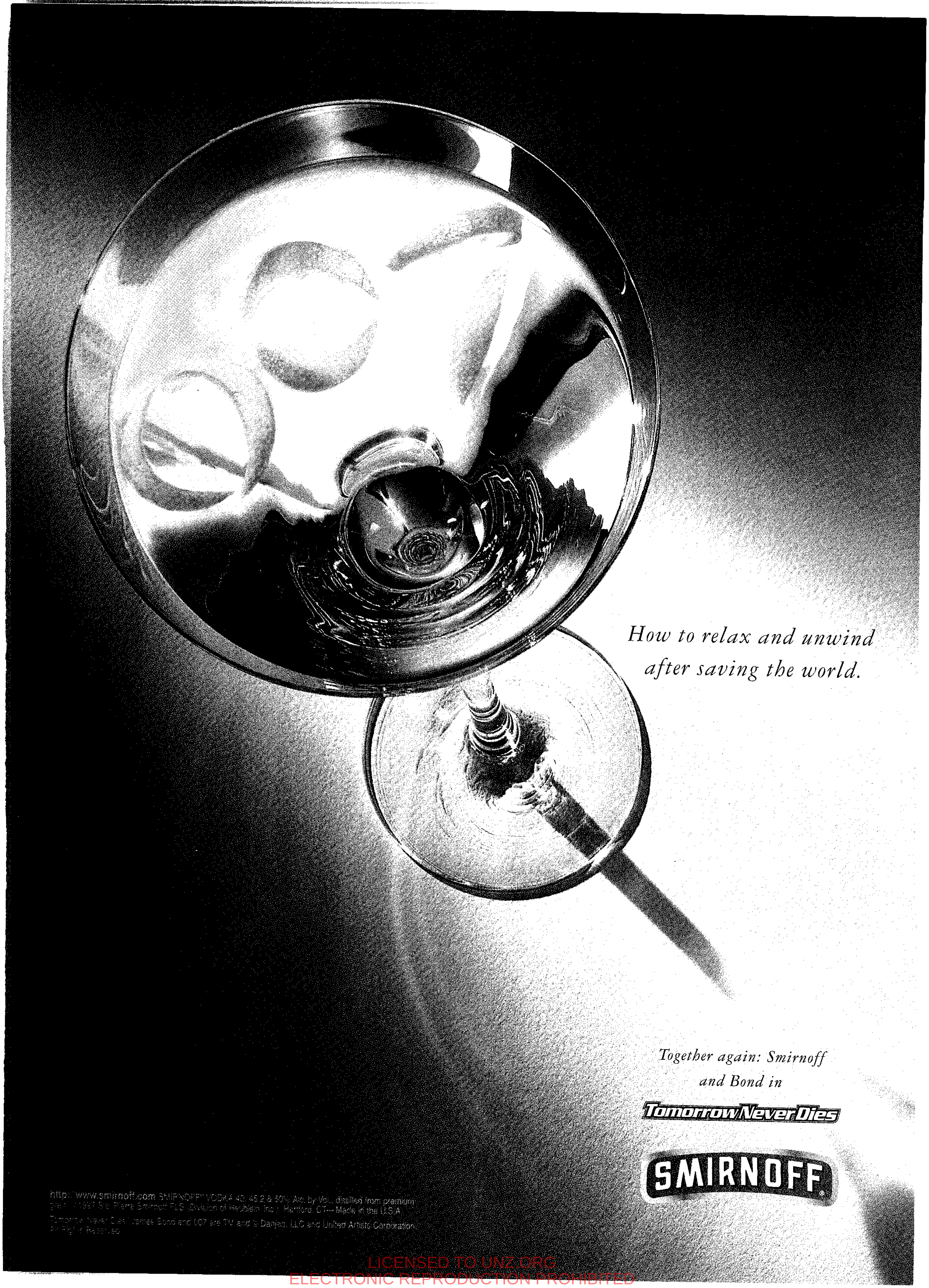

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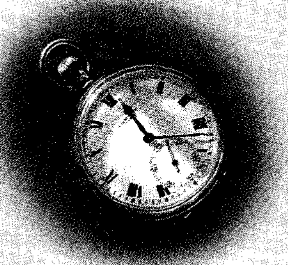

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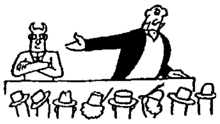
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

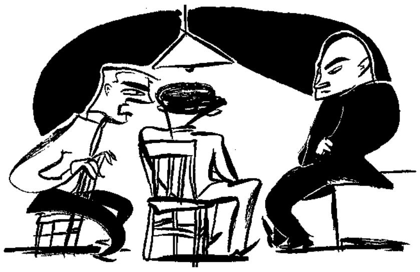
THE BENCH

Why we won't hear exactly what Terry Nichols told the F.B.I.



THE police-interrogation scene is a staple of B movies and television cop shows. But the good-cop, bad-cop routine, with all its high-wire emotional drama, exists in real life as well. The story of the F.B.I.'s questioning of Terry Nichols will soon dominate his trial, now under way in Denver, on charges that he conspired to bomb the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, in Oklahoma City. But this particular interrogation also illuminates a behind-the-scenes controversy within the F.B.I. itself.

The most important evidence against Nichols is probably the nine-and-a-half-hour interview he gave to federal agents just before his arrest on April 21, 1995, two days after the bombing. "In the course of this trial," prosecutor Larry Mackey promised the jury in his opening statement, "you will have the opportunity to hear what Terry Nichols told the F.B.I. . . . You will hear from agents Steve Smith and Scott Crabtree. They'll describe that interview for you." The agents will "describe" the interview because no audio or video recording of it exists. As Mackey told the jury, the agents "did not tape-record Terry Nichols' statement but, rather, took contemporaneous notes and then prepared a written report." This, Mackey said, was "consistent with F.B.I. policy."



ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

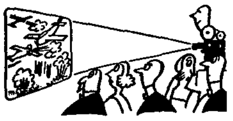
The no-taping policy puts the F.B.I. at odds with many other law-enforcement agencies around the country, and it has become increasingly controversial within the bureau itself. According to Howard M. Shapiro, who recently stepped down as general counsel of the F.B.I., the policy stems from the bureau's famously exalted self-image. "The bureau has thought that when an agent takes the stand that's enough. You don't need a tape," Shapiro said. "The bureau, uniquely among federal law-enforcement agencies, has that reputation—that the jury can and should believe the agent's account. History shows that in the vast majority of cases it's correct."

Self-regard isn't, of course, the only reason the F.B.I. shuns the taping of interrogations. There's the worry that a tape recorder might inhibit a suspect from talking, and, as Shapiro delicately suggests, there's also the concern that jurors might not like what they see of their government in action. "It ain't pretty," Shapiro said. "The perfectly lawful and ethical means that one uses to extract a confession from a suspect—cajoling, encouraging, and threatening with available criminal sanctions—don't necessarily sound gentlemanly." Defense attorneys have a more jaded view. "The terrorizing that goes on, the good-cop, bad-cop stuff, is a lot more real on tape than it is when an agent talks about it," said Gerald Lefcourt, the president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys.

Judging from their actions so far, Nichols' lawyers will be throwing all of the usual accusations against the F.B.I. agents, plus one more. In his opening statement, defense attorney Ronald Woods suggested that the F.B.I.'s account of the interrogation will show browbeating, incompetence, distortion—and bad penmanship. The agents' notes of Nichols' interview, Woods told the jury, "are totally illegible." —JEFFREY TOOBIN

EUPHEMISM DEPARTMENT

Can a thumbs-up from Madeleine Albright open a picture?

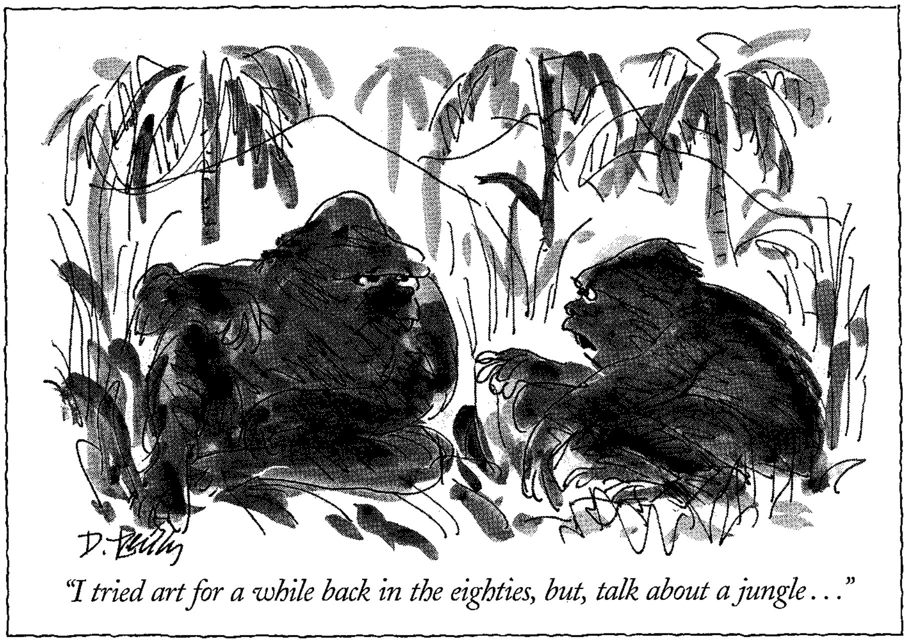


"WELCOME TO SARAJEVO," a film based on the true story of a war correspondent who smuggled a young girl out of a Sarajevan orphanage, is a very powerful movie. However, when Miramax releases the film next week the company will not be using the "P" word to promote it. "The convention would have been to call this 'a powerful movie,' " Mark Gill, who is the president of Miramax's Los Angeles office, explained the other day. "But the minute you say 'powerful' in the context of Sarajevo the assumption is that it's depressing." Instead, Miramax is referring to the movie, which is based on the book "Natasha's Story," by Michael Nicholson, as "inspirational," or, more enticing still, "an inspirational true story."

Such are the exigencies of marketing an entertainment whose subject is as unpalatable as war—particularly when the war in question prompted a nationwide tune-out. (Even George Clooney wouldn't have been enough to sell "The Peacemaker" at the box office if it had been called, say, "The Bosnian Connection.") By using focus groups, Miramax discovered that when people heard the word "Sarajevo" they thought, as Gill put it, "Something I saw on CNN; something that is too complicated and ugly for me to want to know much about." It could have been worse: the original title was simply "Sarajevo." "We were able to persuade the filmmakers to at least call it 'Welcome to Sarajevo,' which has the ironic wink of a tourist brochure," Gill said. The movie’s trailer gives significant play to Woody Harrelson, who has a supporting role as a cynical journalist, and to a scene in which bikini-wearing young lovelies compete in a “Miss Besieged Sarajevo” beauty contest. Efforts on the part of an art director to have all-Woody posters were, laudably, resisted.

One influential group, the foreign-policy community, has needed no prompting to see “Welcome to Sarajevo”: the film was screened for Strobe Talbott and for Richard Holbrooke, who passed the good word to the Secretary of State, who sought the counsel of *The New Republic’s* Leon Wieseltier about tracking down the film. “One day I suddenly had Leon on the phone, saying, ‘Madeleine Albright wants to see this film *immediately*,’ ” Miramax’s Cynthia Swartz said. But many journalists weren’t so eager, such as the magazine editor who finally explained why she’d skipped the two screenings that had been set up just for her by saying, “I just can’t see a movie in which babies are killed.” For the record, there are no babies killed in “Welcome to Sarajevo”—actually, babies are *saved*—but selling the movie has required an inordinate amount of cajoling, and even shaming. “I saw Tom Brokaw running in the park,” said Kathie Berlin, a consultant hired by Miramax to court political types, “and he said, ‘I swear, I swear—this weekend.’ ”

At least one person doesn’t consider the title a liability. Phil Robinson, the talented writer-director of “Field of Dreams,” is making his own Bosnia movie, starring Harrison Ford and Kristin Scott Thomas. Robinson wanted to call *his* film “Sarajevo,” but in light of the Miramax release he was compelled to choose an alternative (the much swingier “The Age of Aquarius”). “Sarajevo and its people represent the triumph of civilization against barbarism,” Robinson says. “The word ‘Sarajevo’ is a powerful word. To me, it’s almost like ‘Chinatown.’ ” —REBECCA MEAD


“I tried art for a while back in the eighties, but, talk about a jungle . . .”

DEPARTMENT OF LEGACIES

The latest chapter in the Texan tale of Bush vs. Baker.

PROBABLY not since, oh, Inauguration Day of 1990 have most people pondered the complex, competitive, semi-symbiotic relationship between former Secretary of State James Baker and former President George Bush. But if you happened to be in Texas during the last few weeks the expression “déjà vu all over again” might have gone through your mind. Here, on October 15th, was Baker, cutting the ribbon at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, at Houston’s Rice University. There, just three weeks later, was George Bush at the opening of the George Bush Presidential Library, in College Station. Attending both events offered a glimpse of legacy-shaping at its finest.

In his heyday, Baker was perceived as the silver fox, the scion of an old Texas family who honored public service and disdained politics—except when he was applying his considerable gifts to getting Bush elected. Bush, in contrast, was the politician who could never really convince his fellow-Texans—and, eventually, everybody else—that he had triumphed over his patrician beginnings; i.e., he needed Baker to make him make the tough choices. But maybe it was the other way around: Baker was too stuck-up to run for office himself, and Bush was too eager to do anything to get himself there. And so the question: Who was the statesman and who was the pol?

Baker’s institute is located on the campus that his grandfather helped to found at Rice University. Though the Sultanate of Oman and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science did contribute, most of the forty million dollars for the institute was raised by some of Texas’s oldest and wealthiest families. (“Is there a Mrs. Rich in there?” a man asked outside the ladies’ room during the opening festivities. “I’m sure there are a lot of Mrs. Riches in here,” came the answer from a woman inside.)

During the dedication, the Windsor chairs on the dais were occupied by Henry Kissinger and Warren Christopher, but both men skipped the windy tributes. Over dinner for a thousand in an adjacent tent, long vowels competed with Texas accents. (“I live somewhere between London and Florence,” one of Baker’s Princeton chums explained. “That’s Bosnia!” his companion joshed.) The only sign of the old, Machiavellian Baker was an end run around his old rival. Apparently, Baker got his invitations out ahead of Bush so as to land some of the biggest international fish: Mikhail Gorbachev accepted Baker’s invitation, and then couldn’t afford a second trip to Texas for Bush’s fête. Conspicuous by his absence was the former President himself: “Maybe he didn’t want to be the center of attention on Baker’s night,” one guest suggested ever so politely.

Or maybe he was just too exhausted from planning his own three-day extravaganza. Bush chose Texas A. & M. for his library not because of any sentimental ties to the state but because ambitious alumni told him that he wouldn’t have to lift a finger to raise the eighty-three million dollars needed. (The Middle Easterners came through far more generously here, making up almost half the list of million-dollar donors. Maybe Baker shouldn’t have mollified Saddam in the years before the Gulf War.)

The dedication ceremony had enough intrigue and emotion to rival a segment of "Sally Jessy Raphael," what with George W. dressing down President Clinton and former President Reagan in his "Welcome" by referring to his dad as "a President who brought dignity and character to the White House," and Bush, Sr., choking back tears and referring to himself as "the luckiest person in the world."

As the crowd thinned, however, one notable could be glimpsed chatting with a lone reporter on the abandoned TV-camera platform. It was James Baker, the once powerful statesman. He looked uncomfortable and a little defeated, like someone who'd lost something but wasn't quite sure what. —Mimi Swartz

HERE AND THERE

What the nanny trial tells us about transatlantic body language.

Watching news clips from the Louise Woodward trial, I found myself suffering, not for the first time, from acute double vision. My English eyes saw one thing; my American-resident eyes saw something else altogether. With one pair, I was for acquittal; with the other, I was for conviction.

Shoulders hunched submissively forward, eyes lowered, voice a humble whisper, Ms. Woodward made a good impression as an English church mouse. Her whole posture announced that she knew her place; that she acknowledged the superior authority of the court; that she was a nobody in the presence of her elders and betters. Her deferential body language was nicely spoken, in the old-fashioned accent of the English class system. I thought she was telling the truth.

Then I looked again. I have lived long enough in this country to know that when you tell the truth in America you stand up straight, you throw your shoulders back, you meet your interlocutor squarely in the eye and speak out plainly. My second pair of eyes saw Ms. Woodward as sullen, masked, affectless, dissembling. Her evasive body language clearly bespoke the fact that she was keeping something of major importance hidden from the court. I thought she was telling lies.

Certainly she was concealing one crucial piece of evidence—her self. In Britain, effacement of the self to the point of near-total erasure is still likely to be seen as a becoming modesty, and a form of truthfulness in its own right. My British edition of Roget's Thesaurus comes down hard on the great American virtue of self-esteem, listing it under the two headings "pride" and "vanity." The drooping, shuttered demeanor of low self-esteem, so graphically displayed in Ms. Woodward's performance on the stand, would be viewed in Elton, Cheshire, as admirable humility—the countenance of innocence itself.

Ms. Woodward had evidently not lived long enough in Newton, Massachusetts, to learn that Americans make a point of taking, or at least trying to take, each other at their word. Tell an Englishman that you're a lowly worm, and his estimation of you will immediately rise. Say the same thing to an American, and he will obligingly squash you with his boot, much as the jury showed itself prepared to squash Louise Woodward.

This conflict between English and American manners makes life a minefield for Brits living in the U.S., and is a source of understandable annoyance for Americans who have to deal with us. I won't easily forget the time, early on in my stay in Seattle as a resident alien (happy phrase), when I fell into a hole of transatlantic misunderstanding at the supermarket.

"And how are you today?" said the checkout clerk.

"Oh, terrible," I said cheerfully.

"I'm so sorry," she said. "What's wrong?" Inside quite a number of Seattle checkout clerks (at least in off-peak periods) there is a therapist waiting to escape.

As I fumbled my way out of this, I saw her face curdling into an expression of contemptuous distaste. I had played idly on her good nature. I was a sarcastic, lying jerk.

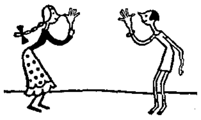
It's no wonder that a certain brand of English accent has become—like cigarette smoking—a hallmark of deviousness in Hollywood. When the American audience with whom I saw "Reversal of Fortune" shuddered pleasurably at Jeremy Irons' portrayal of Claus von Bulow, it was Irons' slippery, uncandid Englishness that made him such a satisfactory villain. He was the embodiment of a peculiarly American vision of perfidious Albion.

When I'm asked how I'm doing now, I say "Real good!" through clenched teeth. I remain a crooked dissembler, of course, but at least I've learned to do it in the high-self-esteem, American style.

—Jonathan Raban

RAG TRADE

The claws on the catwalk are sharper than ever.



Backstage at Rifat Ozbek's recent fashion show in Manhattan, Naomi Campbell was going through her last-minute prep for the catwalk: *cell phone*—stow in handbag; *moisturizer*—smooth over ankles; *three-and-a-half-inch bamboo fingernail*—attach to pinkie. Like several of Ozbek's models, Campbell wore a solitary, quasi-witchy stiletto nail extension, in keeping with the show's Haitian theme. ("The lighter side of voodoo" was how Ozbek characterized his collection.) The vogue for fingernails that could pass for kitchen utensils apparently began last month in London, where the designer Fabio Piras equipped his models' fingertips with corkscrews, wires, and skewers, as if each frail girl were brandishing a pair of Swiss Army knives. And at the Paris collections Alexander McQueen gave his nail technician the improbable brief "Dolly Parton meets Charlie's Angels in the Wild West."

Fingernail professionals suggest that the new Scissorhands look is, perhaps, the only way for nail fashions to go. Since the gangrenous colors popular last year have become mainstream (even Revlon has an ugly-color line), edginess is that much harder to come by. Sheril Bailey, who does nails for *Allure* and *Vogue*, thinks the stiletto trend is too impractical to last (apart from the obvious fashion-world use: one of Ozbek's models pantomimed using her bamboo nail as a coke spoon). Bailey reports that the next big thing is likely to be pierced nails, or maybe bondage nails. "I was on a photo shoot and one of the girls had a ring in her navel, and we did a ring on the nail, and attached a shoelace, and tied it up," Bailey said. "When you think about it, having your hand attached by a long chain to your navel is *genius.*"

—Rebecca Mead

THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

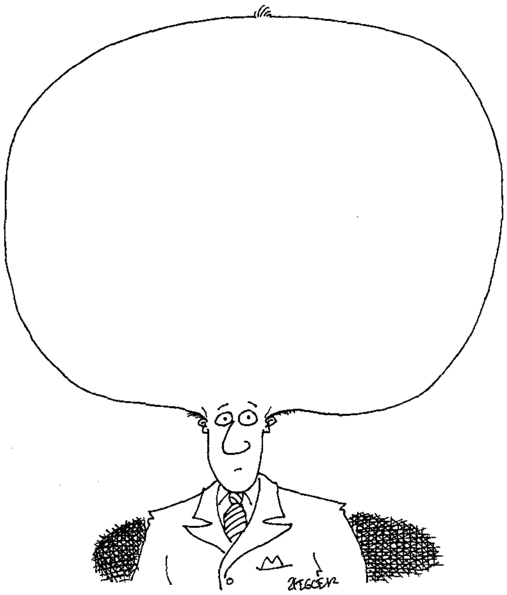
SPEAK, MEMORY

Remember when remembering was something you didn't need a laptop or a therapist for?

BY KURT ANDERSEN

MEMORY, all kinds of memory, is exploding. Since the early eighties, when I switched from merely typing words to processing them, the memory in my desktop computer has got four hundred thousand per cent bigger. Back then, almost all mechanical communication took place by phone, entirely evanescent; now, however, much of the best chatter is by microprocessed fax and E-mail, stored indefinitely in bottomless computer memories. Our telephones remember whom we just called; computers remember the last three hundred Web sites we visited. A whole new fin-de-siècle TV genre—videos: funniest, scariest, deadliest—exists entirely as a function of the proliferation of dirt-cheap electronic memory.

As artificial memory has expanded, we have come to think of our own brains as computers, and of each individual's memory as infinitely accessible, full of retrievable terabytes of juicy information dating back to childhood. According to this cyber-Freudian idea, human memory is not itself selective but only selectively accessed. Thus, during the last decade many minds have proven vulnerable to hackers—that is, to the psychotherapists who encourage patients to "remember" lurid fictions as actual facts from their own lives. During Patricia Burgus's treatment for depression in the late eighties and early nineties at a hospital in Chicago, for instance, psychiatrists used drugs and hypnosis to help her "recall" that she had sex with John F. Kennedy (an incident nowhere to be found in Seymour Hersh's "The Dark Side of Camelot"), belonged to a satanic cult, and ate human flesh. Burgus eventually realized that she had not been a devil-worshipping cannibal after all, or one of J.F.K.'s floozies, and two weeks ago she got a $10.6-million settlement from her former caregivers.



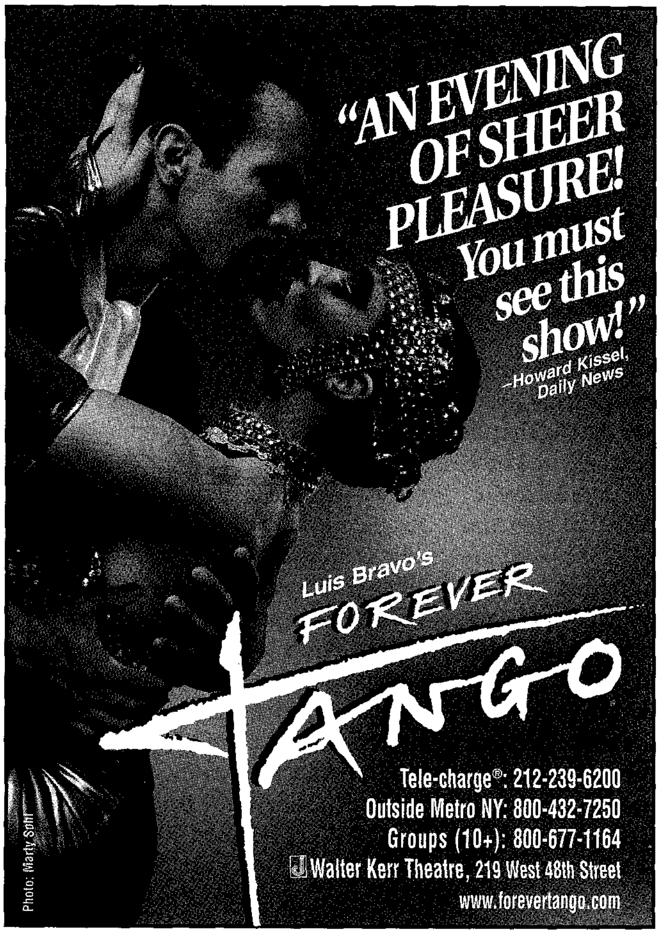
JACK ZIEGLER

In this age of fungible memory, many of the most exciting "recovered" episodes turn out to be fabrications—like the sexual-blackmail contracts between President Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe that Sy Hersh discovered were spurious and left out of his book, and accounts of White House meetings that Robert Reich embellished for his recent memoir, "Locked in the Cabinet." It was the recovered-memory vogue that helped turn an obscure 1991 fiction (Kathryn Harrison's "Thicker Than Water") into best-selling 1997 fact (Kathryn Harrison's "The Kiss"). But a lot of entirely bona-fide memories have been recovered this season as well. The unearthed cache of videotapes that show President Clinton schmoozing campaign donors was damaging not just because of the money-for-influence spectacles the tapes recorded but because the tapes existed at all: indiscriminate electronic recording of Presidential conversations in the White House smells bad—Watergate Lite. Soon after the Clinton videos turned up, in fact, so did a fresh new batch of Watergate transcripts, as if the national hard drive contained a single "Scandal, White House, tapes" file, and clicking on 1996 DEMOCRATS caused 1971 REPUBLICANS to pop open as well. The recovered Watergate memories don't depict Nixon as a satanist—not officially, anyway. "The Jews, you know . . . are stealing everything," Nixon says to Haldeman on one of the newly transcribed tapes. And, another time, "You see, the I.R.S. is full of Jews."

That same week, we learned that Clare Boothe Luce, the yin to Nixon's yang, had kept handwritten notes of her several LSD experiences during the early sixties. While tripping, the former Ambassador and congresswoman noted her intention to "Capture green bug for future reference." She had the bad-trip epiphanies ("The futility of the search to become one. Do you hear the drum?") as well as the good-trip epiphanies ("Mountains in distance seem . . . more relaxed. . . . Nature can do nothing awkward, or tasteless.")

Why did she keep the notes secret? She realized that a person in her position—the wife of the editor-in-chief of Time, Inc.!—ought not to be seen endorsing acid. In that sense she was the first among tens of millions of Americans to cope with a peculiar problem of the late twentieth century: Mrs. Luce chose to recover her memories posthumously, several decades after the fact, just as baby-boomer parents who took drugs decades ago dissemble about the subject now, choosing to practice selective memory until their children are older.

Bill Clinton, when asked if he remembered smoking marijuana, made his most celebrated and telling public utterance, his version of Nixon's "I am not a crook" or Reagan's "I don't recall": "I didn't inhale" had the requisite hair-splitting, the desire to please everyone, and the convenient slipperiness of memory—especially pre-home-video memory. Recovered memories have consistently caused trouble for Clinton (Gennifer Flowers, Paula Jones, James McDougal). Now former Presidential counsellor George Stephanopoulos is writing a memoir of his White House service, and although it has been widely reported that he hired a "memory consultant" to help him, Stephanopoulos says no, he's doing it the old-fashioned way. He told me, "I'm having no problems reconstructing memories." ♦



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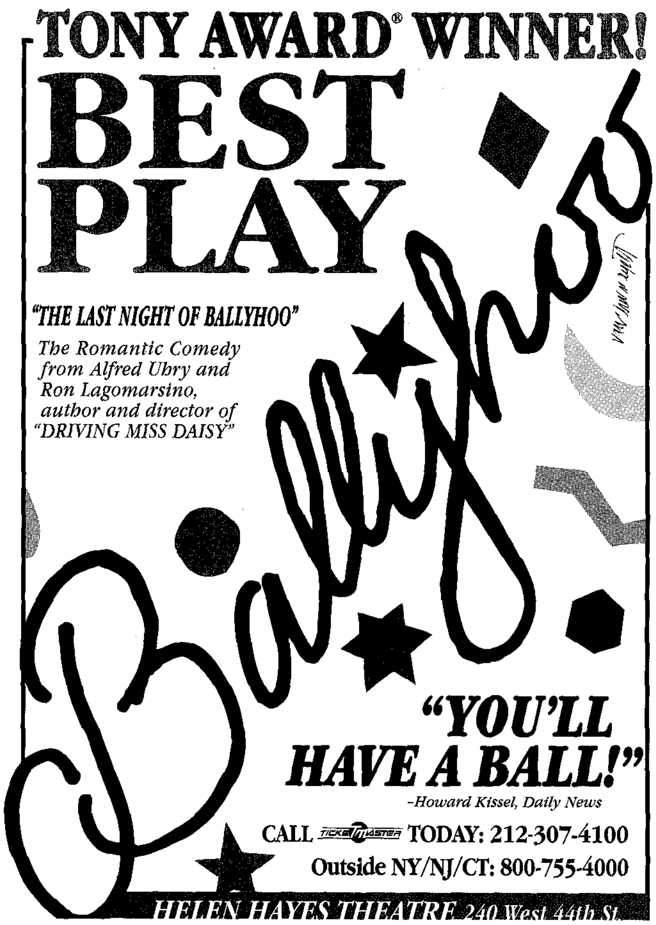

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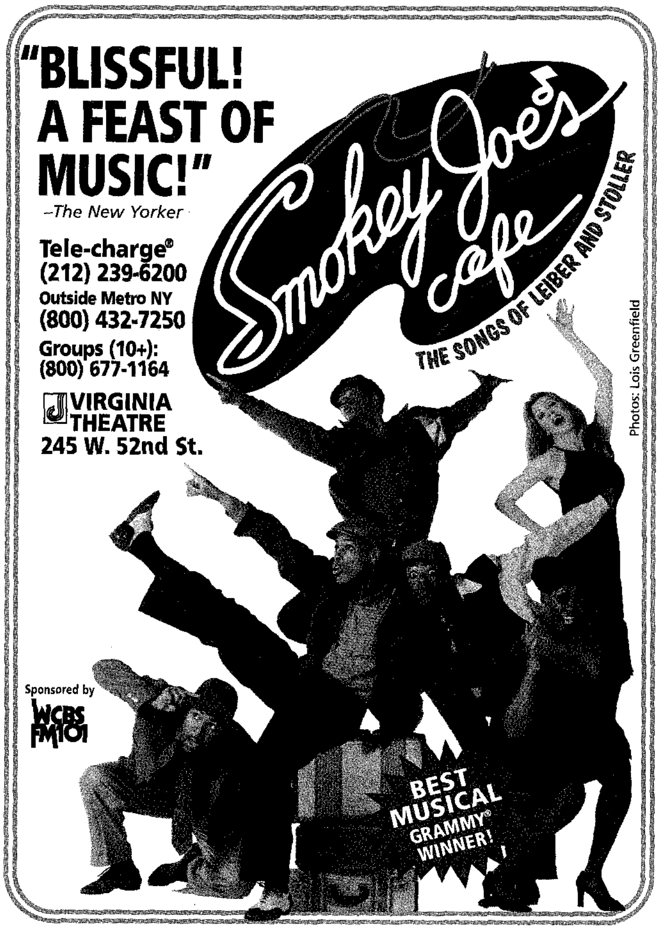

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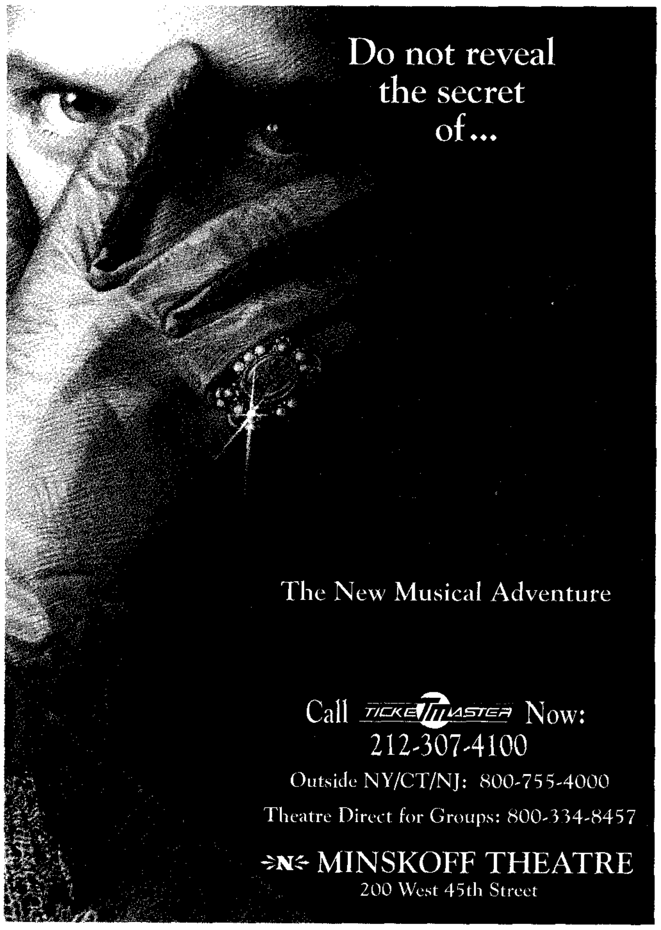

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PROFILE

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ÉLITIST

After twenty years at the helm, Philippe de Montebello wants the Met to keep pulling in the crowds—but not if it has to become a theme park.

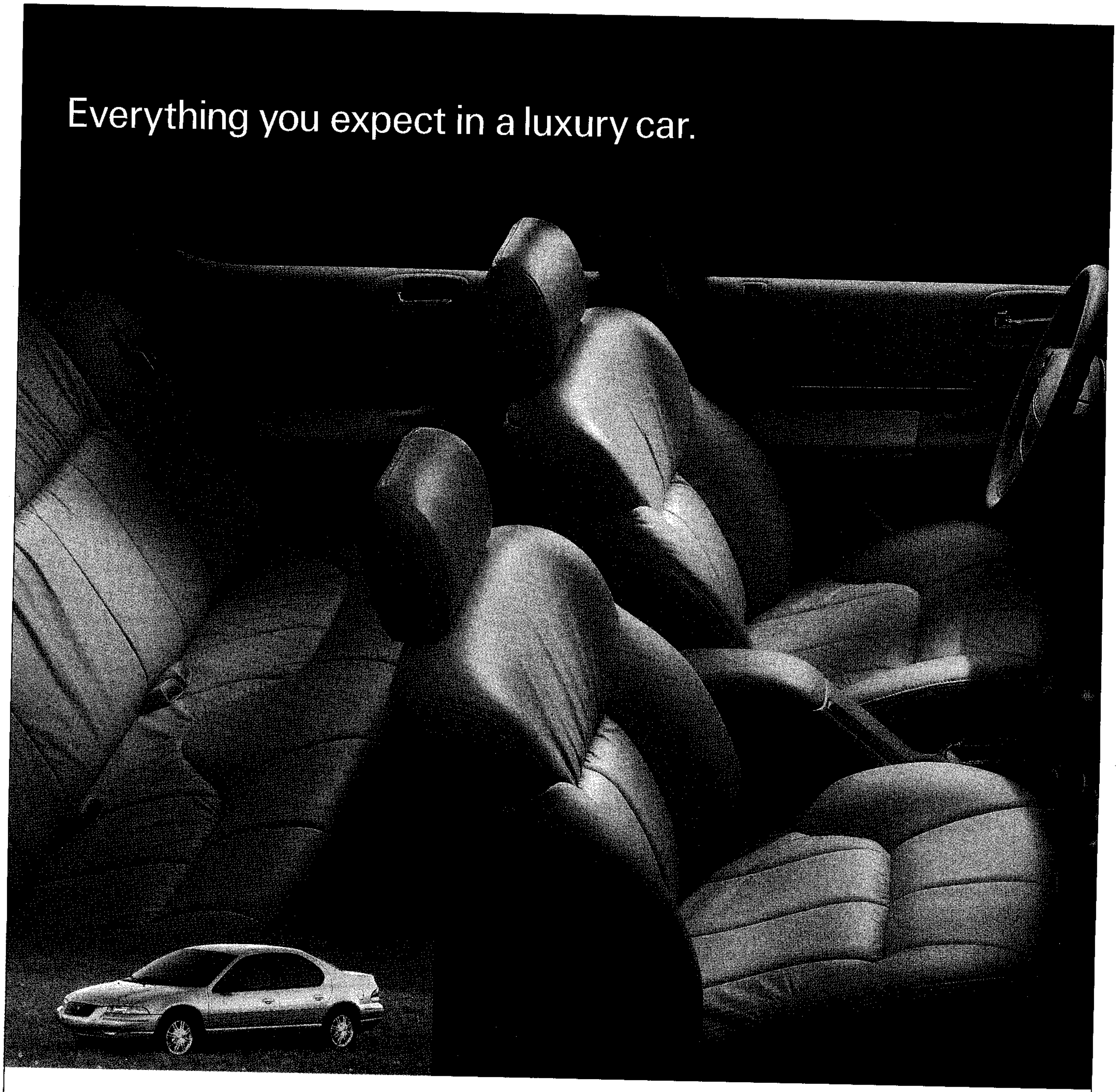
BY CALVIN TOMKINS

When Philippe de Montebello quit graduate school in 1963 to become a curatorial assistant at the Metropolitan Museum, he ordered a supply of business cards from Cartier with the elegantly engraved inscription "Philippe de Montebello—The Metropolitan Museum of Art." His father considered this an absurd extravagance, but Philippe explained to him at the time, "I will still be able to use them when I'm the director." This kind of self-confidence can be irritating in a young man, especially when it turns out to be justified, and de Montebello certainly irritated a number of colleagues during his early years at the Met. One of them remembers his getting up from the table in the staff lunchroom in 1964, during a conversation about the New York World's Fair of that year, and saying, dismissively, "I would never go to a world's fair." Today, after twenty years as the Met's director, he is more tolerant of interests that he does not happen to share, but his own interests still center largely on the Metropolitan, and the Metropolitan sometimes seems to have recast itself in his image. The de Montebello baritone, purring with Gallic sibilants and labials in the Acoustiguided ear of countless visitors, is the authentic voice of the museum. (It is such a rich and sonorous instrument that certain colleagues try to inveigle him into saying words, like "brochure," which take on extra dimensions when he uses them.) His tall, erect figure and handsome profile lend star quality to his remarks at the black-tie openings and museum dinner parties that he claims, somewhat unconvincingly, to loathe. ("I will know, after I die, that I have arrived in Hell if I am greeted by someone in black tie," he says.) A firm and resourceful administrator, he has kept the place running smoothly for two decades, with none of the controversies and contretemps that so frequently afflicted it under Thomas Hoving, his brilliant, mercurial, and dangerously flawed predecessor.

Other museums may surpass the Metropolitan in certain areas of collecting—there are better Renaissance paintings in the Uffizi and more French masterpieces in the Louvre—but for depth and comprehensiveness the Met has no equal. It is a universal museum, whose seventeen curatorial departments cover what the director likes to describe as "every category of art in every known medium from every part of the world during every epoch of recorded time." Under the master plan for redevelopment that was approved in 1970, the place has doubled in size, adding a million square feet of floor space, and the staff now numbers nineteen hundred full-time employees. After five deficit years, in the early to mid-nineties, traceable mainly to cutbacks in city and state support, the Met is now running in the black, and the 1996-97 attendance figure—five million five hundred thousand visitors—was its highest ever. Rising income from admission fees, membership dues, and the museum's very substantial merchandising operations have helped to offset the lost governmental support, and the current, four-hundred-million-dollar fund drive has already raised more than half that amount, with a couple of years to run. The fact that de Montebello runs this vast and complex enterprise so well, bringing in funds and visitors in ever-increasing numbers while managing to maintain the museum's enviable reputation for high-level scholarship, astute acquisitions, and masterly exhibitions, has enabled the trustees to view his twenty-year tenure in the director's job (he became acting director on July 1, 1977, and director ten months later) with quiet satisfaction and considerable relief.

De Montebello oversees an ever-changing museum: the work of art, he insists, should be the primary experience. Photograph by Max Vadukul.

Many trustees have not forgotten how much dicier things were during Hoving's eleven-year reign. Hoving transformed the Met, and in doing so he changed the way all big American museums are run. The 1970 master plan (which he initiated), the international loan exhibitions, the gala openings and media events, the new



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and dramatic display techniques that presented works of art with what Hoving called "flair and outcry," the endowed curatorships and escalating salary levels that attracted top talent in many departments, the proliferating gift shops and merchandising gambits to serve a rapidly growing audience for whom museumgoing was no longer simply, or even primarily, an aesthetic experience—all this helped to turn the Metropolitan into New York's No. 1 tourist attraction, and put pressure on other museums around the country to rethink their programs and goals. But Hoving excelled at self-contradiction. The great popularizer was also a sometimes reckless autocrat, who alienated his own curators, circumvented the trustees, fought with the press, and dragged the museum into acrimonious controversies. His directorship was a high-wire act, thrilling at times but with an ever-present potential for disaster, and Hoving himself struck a lot of people as an egotistical wise guy, who cared too much about personal publicity and too little about the museum.

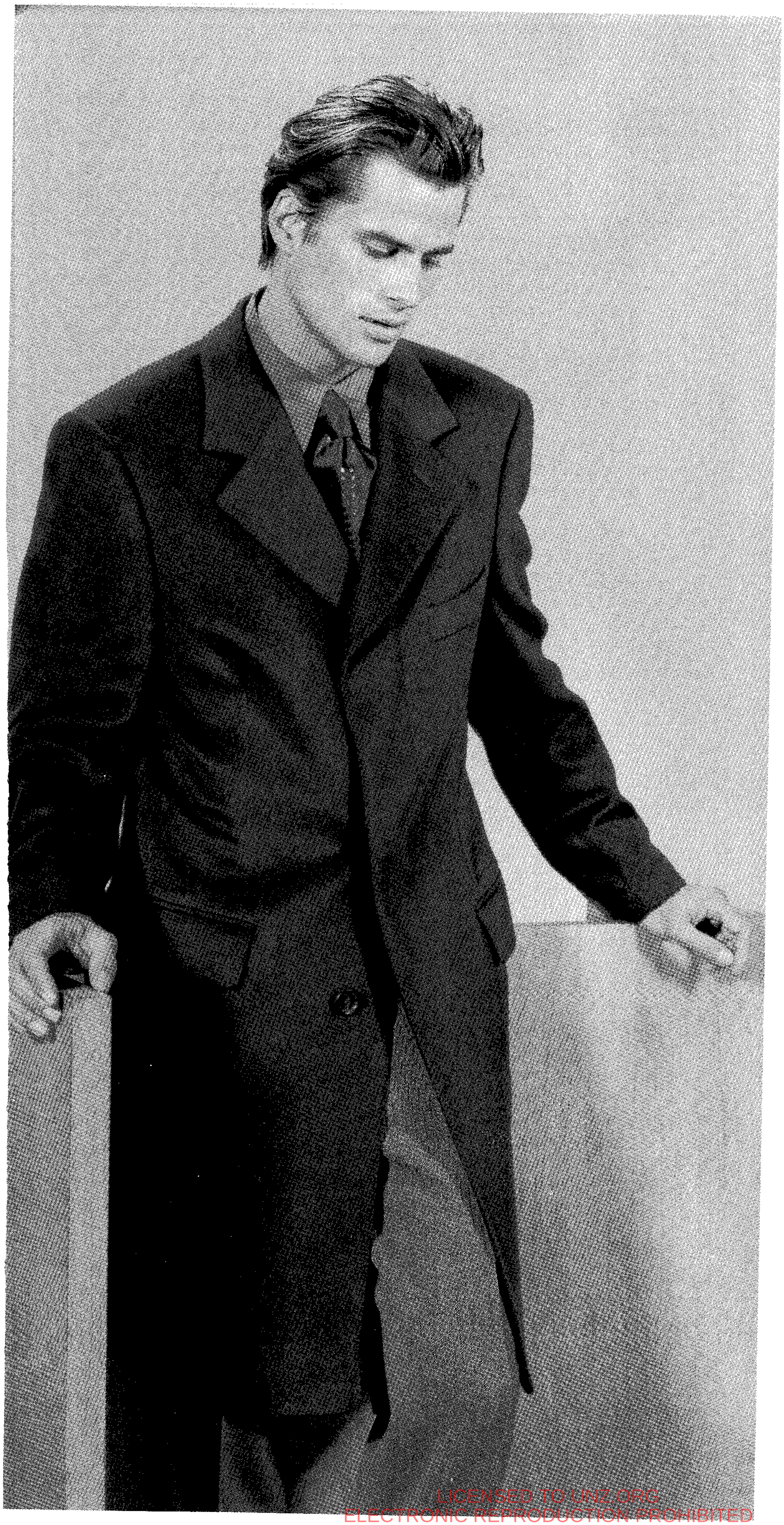
In some ways, de Montebello can be seen as the anti-Hoving. Conservative, aristocratic, hardworking, and wholly committed to the institution, he has won the ungrudging respect of the curators, the support staff, and the trustees. As for the mass audience, he has welcomed it on his own terms, which are different from Hoving's. Hoving once wrote that his goal was "to make the Met a people's cultural paradise, full of fun and celebration," and anyone who goes there on a weekend—or on a Friday or Saturday evening, when the museum stays open until nine o'clock and attracts legions of sociable twenty-somethings—might say that he succeeded too well. De Montebello worries a lot about the democratization of the museum experience. If the emphasis is mainly on fun and celebration, he feels, the current boom in museum attendance won't last, and some of the nation's rapidly expanding museums will find themselves in deep trouble.

De Montebello is sometimes accused of being an unregenerate élitist. It is just about the only serious criticism directed at him these days, either inside or outside the museum, and he accepts it without hesitation or apology. Just last winter, he advanced a spirited defense of élitism in a speech to the College Art Association, in which he described a subtle but pervasive shift of emphasis "*from* the work of art, *to* the museum itself as the primary experience," and spoke of the "shudder of unease" he feels whenever he reads or hears that art museums have become our greatest entertainment bargains.

Over lunch recently in the trustees' dining room—at his regular corner table, overlooking Cleopatra's Needle in Central Park—de Montebello, impeccably dressed in one of the well-cut double-breasted suits that define his own élite image, elaborated on the theme of that talk. Too many museums today are trying to become like theme parks or upscale shopping malls, he said, and he went on, "It's like the ad the Victoria and Albert Museum used to run—'A great restaurant with art on the side.' There is a complicity in the notion that you have to compete with Disney, and this is *tragic.* If you start to compete on the level of the theme parks, you are going to lose, because they can do it so much better. Now, I'm not going to expound the boring, predictable, not terribly valid point that museums should focus exclusively on art. We are committed to filling the house, and all these other things—restaurants, clean bathrooms, public programs, and so forth—that we provide are a necessary part of meeting the public halfway. My concern is one of emphasis and degree. What we have to do is underscore and promote what makes us different, and that is the art." But works of art, as he had pointed out in his speech to the College Art Association, are often difficult and challenging, and how, I asked him, do you promote those to a mass audience that comes to be entertained?

"I don't agree that most of them come just to be entertained," he replied briskly. "And I hate to call it a mass audience. The numbers are not high enough, frankly, at five million visitors. If you begin to decorticate those numbers, you find that there are a great many repeat visitors—I don't mean people who come once or twice but people who come six or seven times, or even twenty times, a year. I would be surprised if our audience is as high as one million *different* human beings. And it's a more sophisticated audience than you get at a museum like the Louvre or the British Museum. A lot of the groups that you see popping in and out of the Louvre have been dumped there with no foreknowledge: they go to the Louvre the way they go to the Eiffel Tower. Same thing in Washington, D.C.: tourists go to see the Washington Monument, the White House, the National Gallery. Most of the people who come here have some interest in art, and they come as an act of volition."

The Met's audience, in de Montebello's opinion, does not have to be sold on the art, because the audience is, a priori, a cultural élite. He returned to the question of populism versus élitism in a number of our subsequent conversations, each time taking pains to emphasize that for him, at least, élitism was an inclusive rather than an exclusive concept. "There's a program here where we bring small groups of public-school kids to the museum on weekends," he told me. "We take them through certain exhibitions, give them a lecture, and so forth. A young black student in one of these groups came forward and asked me what the museum was doing to combat



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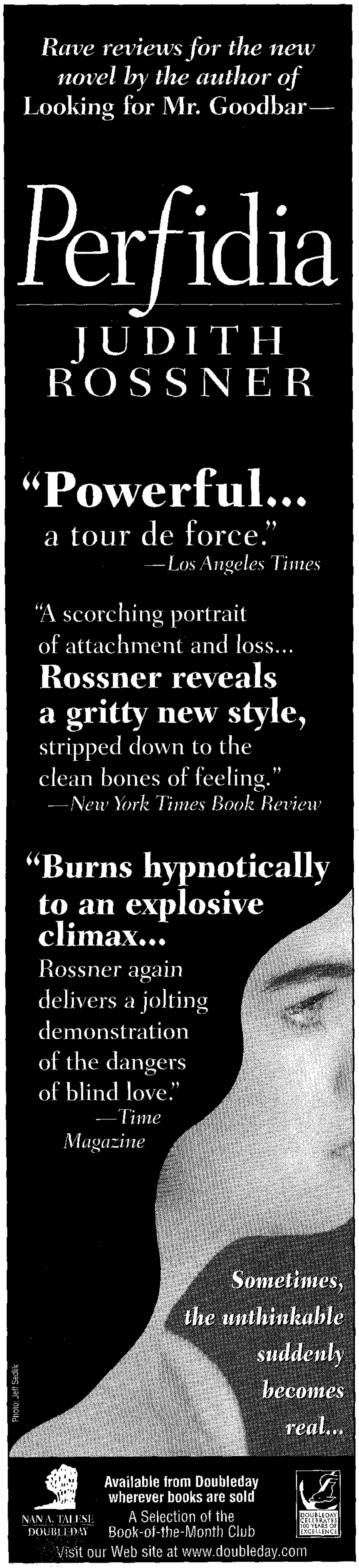

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élitism. I said to him, 'But you're an élitist yourself! This is Saturday, and you're not hanging out on some street corner, are you? You've come here because you want to learn something, or to better yourself in some way, and I'd say that makes you an élitist.' The kids loved it. They applauded. But that is something I believe. My argument is that élitism is not only compatible with democracy, it is the very essence of democracy, in that it seeks to bring as many people as possible to a higher level of understanding and appreciation. When I'm asked 'Well, aren't you an élitist institution?' my only answer is 'That is exactly what we are.' That is what art is, and that is what every visitor to the Met is—by crossing the threshold they are joining the élite."

It might be said that élitism comes naturally to Guy-Philippe Lannes de Montebello, who was born in Paris, in 1936, and grew up in a family that was descended on his mother's side from the Marquis de Sade and on his father's side from Marshal Jean Lannes, one of Napoleon's generals. (Napoleon named him Duc de Montebello after his victory in the battle of Montebello.) Philippe's great-grandmother, the Comtesse Laure de Chevigné, was one of the models for Proust's Duchesse de Guermantes. His aunt, Marie-Laure de Noailles, was a famous and somewhat scandalous patron of avant-garde art and letters in Paris between the wars; Philippe knew her well, went often to her great house, in the Place des États-Unis, and once attended a bullfight in Nîmes with her and Picasso.

Roger de Montebello, Philippe's father, had three careers. After an early phase as a successful portrait painter in Paris, he became the art editor of *Marie Claire;* he also wrote art criticism, and after the war he got involved in trying to develop a process he had invented for three-dimensional photography, a sort of pre-holography. Unable to find backing in France for his invention, he moved, with his wife and four sons, to New York in 1951. Philippe, the second oldest, was fourteen at the time, and he had difficulty adjusting. "My parents had told us everything would be better in America, but everything was not better," he recalled. "I didn't speak much English at first, so it was hard." His English improved soon enough. Languages came easily to him—he already knew Spanish (he'd had a Spanish nanny as a child), and some German—and in New York he acquired at the Lycée Français the underpinnings of an English vocabulary that would eventually allow him to use words like "decorticate" in casual conversation. Philippe had known since he was eleven or twelve that he wanted to be involved with works of art when he grew up. For a while, he thought of becoming an artist, but his father spiked that notion: "He told me I didn't have any talent, and I believed him." By the time he entered Harvard, in 1954, he was leaning toward museum work. He majored in art history, with a minor in Russian. He also became an American citizen, in 1955, and dropped out of college for two years to do his compulsory military service.

Back at Harvard, he fell in love with a Radcliffe girl in Howard Mumford Jones's nineteenth-century-English-poetry course. Her name was Edith Myles, and her background was pure Eastern establishment: born and reared in Manhattan, she had gone to Brearley and Miss Porter's School, and most of her adult male relatives were lawyers or doctors. (Her uncle John Marshall Harlan had been a Supreme Court Justice.) Although Edith was three years behind Philippe at Harvard, they both ended up graduating in 1961, because of his military service. They were married that June, and spent their honeymoon driving around France and visiting his relatives in different parts of the country.

In his second year of graduate school at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts, where he concentrated on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century French and Netherlandish painting, de Montebello was offered a job in the Department of European Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum. He left without his Ph.D. degree; he had wanted a Ph.D. mainly in order to get a job at the Met, and now he had one. The Met in those days was going through one of its quiet periods. James J. Rorimer, the director, was not an innovator but a consolidator, a superb museum man who had trouble delegating authority: if a gallery was being painted, he had to check every color sample. There hadn't been a special exhibition in years; the nearest approach to one was the annual loan show put together from works that the trustees and some collectors would deposit at the museum for safekeeping when they went away for the summer.

Many of the younger staff members found de Montebello standoffish and a bit pompous. The problem was partly his shyness. He had a terrible time remembering people's names, and was embarrassed to say so. (To this day, he depends on Edith to rescue him at Met dinner parties. "She'll whisper in my ear, 'That's So-and-So, she just gave you ten million dollars.' ") Once you got past the shyness, though, he could be surprisingly open and amusing. Linda Gillies, who had been a classmate of Edith's at Miss Porter's and who spent a lot of time at the de Montebellos' apartment on East Sixty-sixth Street during the early years of their marriage, always found Philippe kind, humorous, and fun to be with. "He was also a snob," she told me, "and haughty, but he was never rude, the way some haughty people are." The de Montebellos' marriage was very solid. Edith, with her own career as a private-school administrator (she currently runs the financial-aid program at Trinity School), has always accepted with grace and good humor the social obligations of museum life, and Philippe, whom women tend to find attractive, has never been interested in anyone else. He also cared a great deal about his job, and Rorimer liked him, and in due time he moved up the ladder from curatorial assistant to assistant curator to associate curator.

When Rorimer died of a heart attack in 1966, though, a new era began at the Met. Several trustees had serious misgivings about Tom Hoving, the dazzlingly brash young man who was chosen to be Rorimer's successor. Hoving had quit his job as chief curator at the Cloisters, the Metropolitan's medieval branch, in Fort Tryon Park, in order to become New York City's Commissioner of Parks under Mayor John Lindsay. Flamboyant, bursting with ideas, and a magnet for publicity, he was clearly going to make the Metropolitan a different sort of place.

The European Paintings Department was one of the first to be shaken up. Hoving greatly admired Theodore Rousseau, the suave and immensely charming head curator of European Paintings, and looked to him as a mentor. He chose Rousseau to fill a newly designated post, that of chief curator, who was to oversee all the curatorial departments. Claus Virch, Rousseau's successor as curator of European Paintings, thought the world of de Montebello, but by this time Rousseau had turned against him. "No one in the museum was more self-assured" than de Montebello, Hoving wrote in "Making the Mummies Dance," his highly unreliable book about his years at the Met, "but Ted Rousseau was convinced he had no eye." De Montebello began to feel that his prospects in the department were not bright; he could see himself spending the next thirty years as an associate curator. The de Montebellos had two children by then, Marc and Laure, and in spite of Hoving's efforts to raise curatorial salaries Philippe was making only thirteen thousand dollars a year. He had started to think about other possibilities when suddenly, in 1969, he was offered a job as director of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. "I will never know why I was asked," he told me. "I literally had to look up Houston on the map—I knew it was in Texas, but I had no idea what part of Texas. I had never done a budget or formally organized an exhibition. They were interested in modern art, which is not my forte. But I took it. I wanted the challenge. Besides, I couldn't pay my bills here. After three years in Houston, I was still paying off Gristede's."

The fledgling director got off to a terrible start in Texas. A reporter who was writing a piece about de Montebello for the Houston *Chronicle* asked him casually, as they stood near the museum's front entrance, what he thought about two contemporary bronze sculptures by the Italian artist Lucio Fontana, which were recent gifts to the museum by the influential collectors Jean and Dominique de Menil. Looking at the sculptures, de Montebello saw that each had a jagged fissure in it, and that the fissures were full of paper wrappers from chewing gum. "Well," he said airily, "they make good receptacles for gum wrappers." The quip was quoted in the ensuing article, which went on to nail the new director as an enemy of modern art. There was a grain of truth in the accusation. Although de Montebello is far too intelligent to dismiss out of hand the art of this century, he does not respond to it the way he does, for example, to Delacroix and Poussin. As for the most recent, post-1960 art, "I know who the artists are," he told me. "I recognize their works when I see them, but I must admit that, no, it doesn't do it for me."

The de Montebellos stayed in Houston for four years. Their third child, Charles, was born there, and Philippe learned the director's job on the job. He turned a provincial museum into a professional one,

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acquired a number of good (mostly European) pictures, and worked hard at adapting to local customs, but he never felt at home. "I'm grateful for the experience," he told me, "but the unmitigated joy of boarding my last flight out of there, without a return ticket—I cannot describe it." This was in 1974, and he was heading back to take over Ted Rousseau's job at the Met. Rousseau was dying of cancer, and Hoving, who had heard good things about de Montebello in Houston, had apparently decided that his eye was not so bad after all.

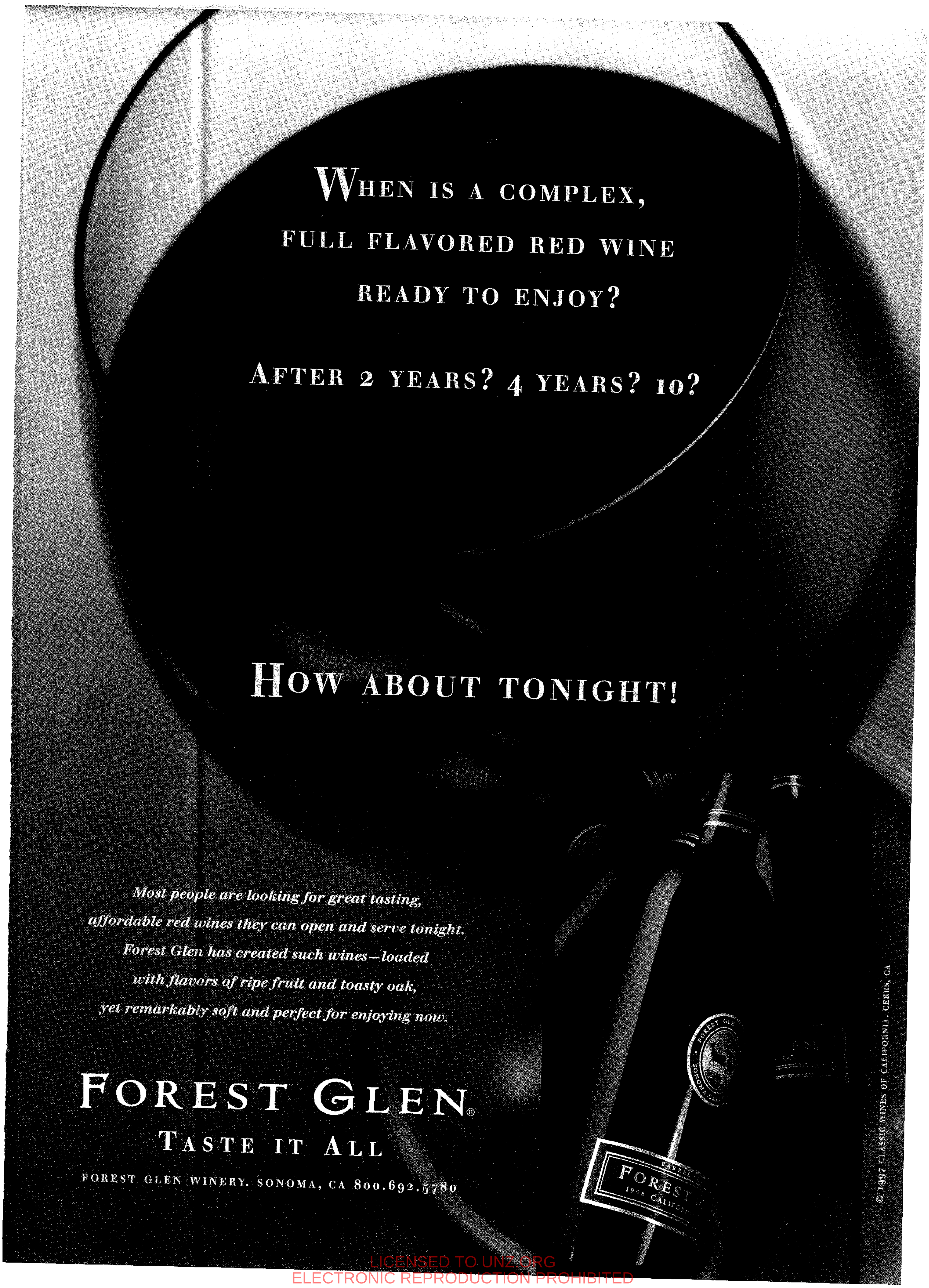
It was de Montebello's good fortune to have missed the worst of Hoving's time of troubles at the Met. The 1969 "Harlem on My Mind" show, whose ham-handed sociological approach offended blacks and Jews in approximately equal measure; the deaccessioning scandals, which involved selling important paintings to help pay for the purchase of Velázquez's magnificent (and very costly) "Juan de Pareja"; the controversy over the Euphronios krater, which the *Times* reported (wrongly, as it turned out) to have been illegally excavated and smuggled out of Italy—these and other embarrassments had all been played out while de Montebello was safely in Houston. Hoving himself had been irreparably damaged by them: he had lost the confidence of many of the trustees, although not of Douglas Dillon, the board's strong-willed chairman, the man who really held the museum together in the embittered last years of Hoving's regime. As the chief curator, de Montebello got along well with Hoving. "Tom was an exhilarating person to work for," he recalls. "In the moments when he wanted to be serious and alert and not onstage, he was utterly brilliant." Hoving was sick of the job, though, and openly resentful of several trustees. His last big idea was for a multimillion-dollar communications center within the museum, to be financed by the publisher Walter Annenberg and run by Hoving, but that fell through in 1977 and he quit. In the years since then he has edited the magazine *Connoisseur*, written five books, and avoided contacts with his former colleagues at the Met.

DE MONTEBELLO was named acting director, and for the next few months he waited anxiously for the trustees to retire the word "acting." In fact, the board was wrestling with the idea of hiring a paid president, to take over some of the administrative burdens and also, in the light of the Hoving disasters, to act as a check on directorial hubris. Shortly before de Montebello was officially named the Metropolitan's eighth director, on May 25, 1978, Dillon moved up to the post of chairman of the board, and William B. Macomber, Jr., a fifty-seven-year-old United States Foreign Service officer who had recently returned from four years as Ambassador to Turkey, became the museum's first paid president. Macomber was also listed as chief executive officer—a designation that made him technically superior to the director.

"I was enraged about that," de Montebello has said. "I told the board it was a terrible system, I even wrote it to them, but I also said I was a good soldier and I wasn't going to let Mr. Macomber ruin my directorship. I would make it work." His way of making it work was to act as though Macomber didn't exist. De Montebello never consulted Macomber, and never went to his office; if a meeting was scheduled there, he always sent a deputy. He even managed to avoid mentioning Macomber's name in public. Since Macomber knew nothing about art and was not inclined to assert his authority, this strategy worked fine. It also made de Montebello something of a hero to the curatorial staff. Once, when de Montebello was away on a trip, Macomber decided that the planned installation in the American Wing of a cast-iron staircase designed by Louis Sullivan was going to cost too much, and he issued an order for it to be replaced with a less expensive modern stairway. De Montebello sent him a stinging memo on his return, saying that Macomber's job was not to do away with the Sullivan staircase but to find the money needed to install it, and that he was to reverse his decision immediately. Macomber reversed it.

It helped that de Montebello was an insider, but for a while the betting was against him. His manner was often high-handed and brusque. Younger curators complained that they never had a conversation with him that was longer than a sentence. But over several years, as he settled in and gained more confidence, the staff found him increasingly approachable.

De Montebello was expected to be a consolidator, a director in the mold of Rorimer rather than of Hoving, but through a combination of necessity and personal initiative he has turned out to be much



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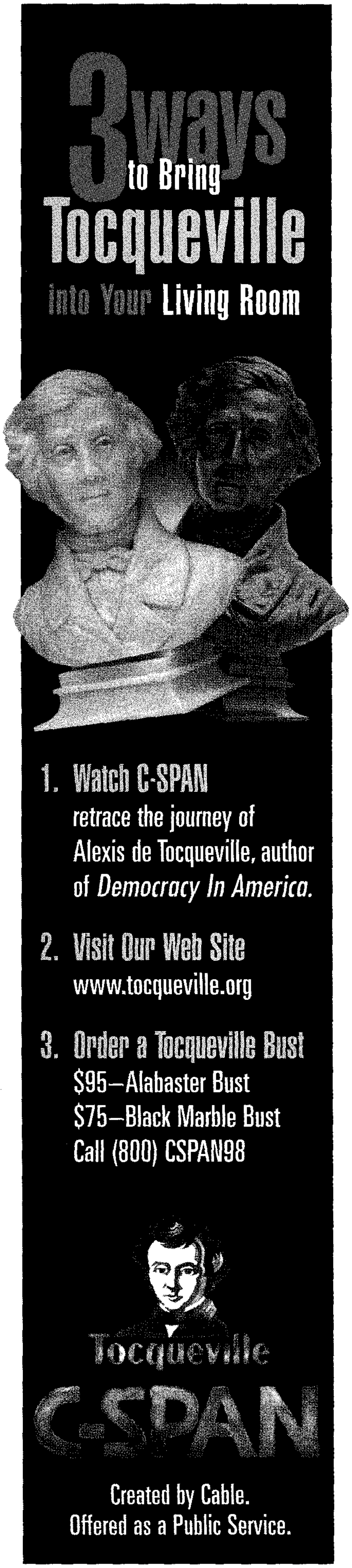

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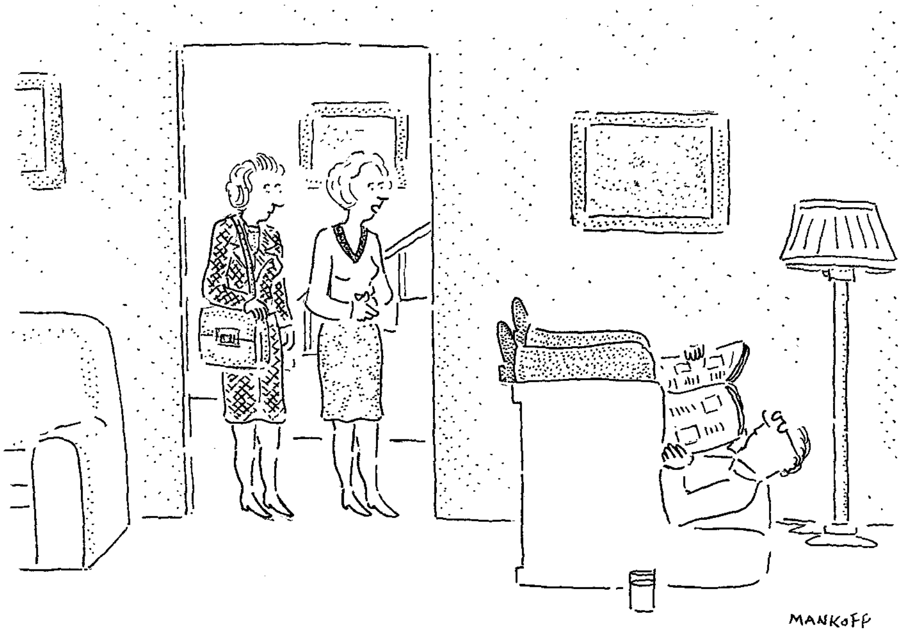

"Harold insists on doing all his own stunts."

• •

more of an activist than he or anyone else anticipated. Most of the external and internal reconstruction projects of the 1970 master plan have been carried out on de Montebello's watch, and so have some equally ambitious projects that were not part of the master plan, such as the Henry R. Kravis Wing for European Sculpture and Decorative Arts and the Lila Acheson Wallace Wing for Twentieth-Century Art. It was de Montebello, the purported enemy of modernism, who engineered a major commitment to the art of this century. Ever since it was founded, in 1870, the Met had been acquiring the work of contemporary artists, but it had done so erratically and at times reluctantly, and it had never set aside any significant space for modern art. Henry Geldzahler, the museum's first curator of twentieth-century art, had pestered Rorimer and then Hoving to do so, but neither of them could quite see why, with three other New York museums competing in this area, the Met should make it a major priority. Most collectors collect recent art, however, since that is what's available, and de Montebello reasoned that if the Met wanted to attract their support it had better provide space where this work could be seen to its best advantage.

Geldzahler had left the museum in 1977 to become New York City's Commissioner of Cultural Affairs. To replace him, de Montebello appointed Thomas B. Hess, the former editor of *ARTnews* and the leading critical champion of Abstract Expressionism. Nearly everyone agreed that this was a brilliant appointment, but Hess died of a heart attack in less than a year. William S. Lieberman, who had held a number of curatorial posts during thirty-four years at the Museum of Modern Art, agreed to step into the job, on de Montebello's assurance that he would receive substantial acquisition funds and exhibition space. Six years later, de Montebello was able to announce that Lila Acheson Wallace, who had contributed generously to the Egyptian Department at the Met but had shown little previous interest in modern art, had given eleven million dollars for a new wing, devoted to twentieth-century art.

Lieberman and his department have been criticized mercilessly in recent years—for buying the wrong pictures, and for not moving swiftly enough to rectify what Tom Hess once described as "a collection of gaps." The Met still has no paintings by Jasper Johns, no great Miró, not much twentieth-century German painting, and glaring weaknesses in other areas. Lieberman, however, has reeled in a number of important collections as gifts or bequests (from Muriel Kallis Newman, Mrs. Clyfford Still, Mr. and Mrs. Klaus Perls, Heinz Berggruen, and Florene M. Schoenborn, among others), and his long and close relationships with collectors are expected to pay further dividends in the future. Not surprisingly, Lieberman is a staunch de Montebello-ite. "Philippe's hauteur," he says, "is just right for this museum."

The most important thing de Montebello has done at the Met, according to de Montebello, is to restore the primacy of the curatorial function. "I wanted to work in real harmony with the heartbeat of this place, which is the curatorial staff," he said. Hoving's curators had resented his tendency to make curatorial decisions without consulting them; two had resigned in frustration, and several others considered leaving. In recent years, there has been very little turnover on the professional staff, and the curators, with one or two exceptions, say that de Montebello has created a climate in which they can do their best work.

George Goldner, who in 1993 left the Getty Institute to come to the Met as curator of Drawings and Prints, was named director of the Ashmolean Museum, in Oxford, England, last December. Five months after accepting the post, however, he decided to stay at the Met, concluding that he would rather be a curator there than a director somewhere else. De Montebello, he told me, had been an important factor in that decision. "I think this is probably the best-managed museum in the world," he said. "There is more emphasis on excellence and on maintaining high standards of scholarship and design, and there is also a strangely egalitarian atmosphere, in the way people are treated, which wasn't true at the Getty." Everyone at the curatorial level calls the director Philippe. (It is doubtful whether anyone has ever *thought* of calling him Phil.) Unlike Hoving, he wants his curators to get credit for major acquisitions and exhibitions in their departments; when V.I.P.s come to view an exhibition, he usually has the curator take them through it. De Montebello's Metropolitan, however, is not as collegial as it may appear. "I don't have committee meetings," he told me. "It's just me. I'm confident enough that I am sufficiently in touch with the people who count here, and that if I make a decision it reflects my ongoing contacts with them. Of course, we have ninety-one curators, all of whom have very definite opinions, so there are instances where my system doesn't work. But I'm comfortable with it." Asked once by an outside consultant to the Met to define his job, de Montebello said, succinctly and incontrovertibly, "I direct."

Associates say that he is more comfortable with women than he is with men. He has placed a number of superbly gifted women in key positions at the Met, including Emily Rafferty, the senior vice-president for Development and Membership; Dorothea Arnold, the curator in charge of the Egyptian Department; and Mahrukh Tarapor, the associate director for Exhibitions. "I'm really doing what he loves," Tarapor told me. "I think the excitement of exhibitions is more part of his personality than of mine." Tarapor worked for four years to bring together this year's "The Glory of Byzantium," a beautiful and rigorously scholarly presentation of religious icons, illuminated manuscripts, paintings, mosaics, liturgical objects, and other material from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries, some of which had never been seen outside the churches and monasteries for which they were made. The show was de Montebello's idea—he had seen a smaller exhibition of Byzantine material in London, and decided on the spot to schedule a comprehensive survey of later Byzantine art. (The Met had covered the earlier period in its "Age of Spirituality" exhibition in 1977.) "Byzantium" cost more than three million dollars, and it found no sponsors until late in the planning, when a Greek banking group came through with substantial

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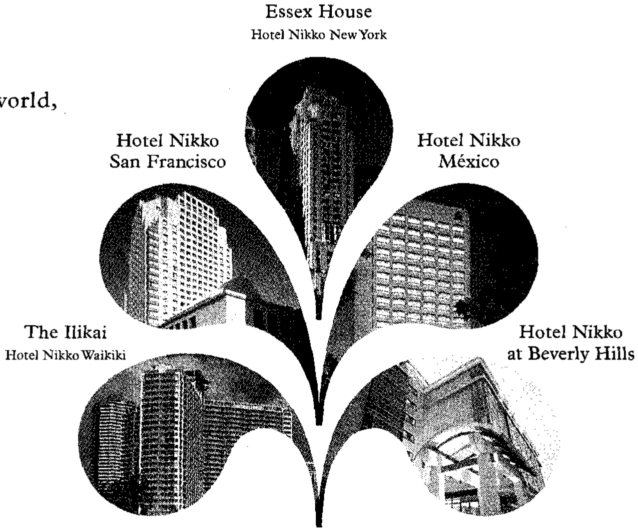

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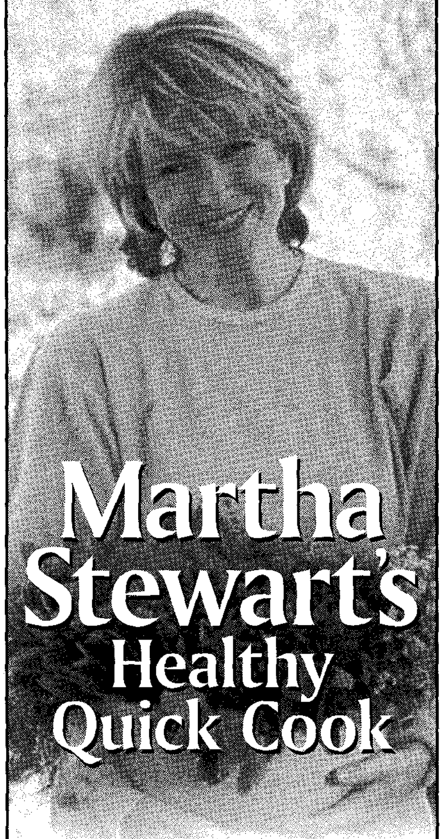

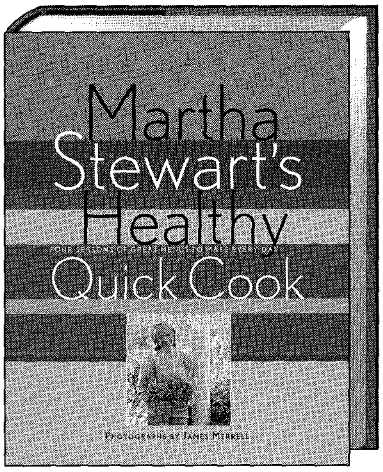
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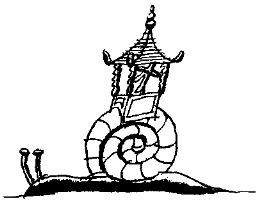
funds. According to Tarapor, who made more than a dozen trips to Greece, Turkey, Russia, and twenty-one other countries to secure the loans, "Philippe never said no to me or curbed me. If he believes in something, it's all the way—nothing held back." The show drew four hundred and sixty thousand visitors, many more than Tarapor and others had expected, and helped to confirm de Montebello's faith in the ability of the Met's audience to recognize and appreciate great art even when the material is unfamiliar to them.

The era of big international loan shows was supposed to have ended with Hoving. Soaring prices for works of masterpiece quality made them too costly to insure, we were told, and it was getting harder and harder to find corporate, governmental, or private sponsors to underwrite the transportation and other costs. We were misinformed. So many museums, including the Met, have become so dependent on the revenues from paid admissions to these mega-shows that they can no longer afford to do without them. When "The Vatican Collections" came to the Met in 1983, sponsored by Philip Morris, it turned a profit of more than two million dollars and allowed the museum to register a small year-end surplus, after six years of rising deficits. In 1989, however, de Montebello made the unilateral decision to stop charging an additional fee for special exhibitions. Some of the trustees were aghast, but he stood firm. "I saw that the big loan shows were going to control the program here, as they now do at several of our major museums," he said recently. "Just look at the promotions for the Renoir portrait show in Chicago, or the Cézanne show in Philadelphia, with full-page ads in the papers for package deals at hotels. Those are wonderful shows—don't get me wrong—but my worry is that tremendous pressure is then put on the museum's directors to duplicate the feat. Abolishing the fee removes that sort of pressure. Here an exhibition is no longer a development tool, with a clear profit-and-loss statement. It still creates a rise in attendance, but one that's much more difficult to measure since we're not selling tickets to specific shows."

The Met has continued to put on important international loan shows—many more of them than in Hoving's day—but the emphasis has changed. It has turned down a number of obvious crowd pleasers in recent years, partly because it prefers to organize its own exhibitions and partly because de Montebello has no interest in shows that don't serve a legitimate scholarly purpose. The recent "Rembrandt / Not Rembrandt," which addressed the problems of attribution in an era of rampant revisionism, and the 1995 "Goya in the Metropolitan Museum of Art" were drawn almost entirely from the Met's own collections. The currently running "Private Collection of Edgar Degas," far from being an excuse for yet another Impressionist extravaganza, deepens our understanding of Degas by showing the art he most admired. (From Ingres and Delacroix to Gauguin and Van Gogh—but not a single Monet!) The "flair and outcry" of Hoving's installations, meanwhile, has given way to less dramatic methods of lighting and presentation. "Whatever we do to lure and capture audiences has to be of really lasting value," de Montebello told me. "Look at 'Byzantium.' Did we re-create, à la 'The Country Houses of Britain,' or whatever they called that show at the National Gallery, great domes and arches? Did we use columns and incense? We did none of that. It was a series of rooms with normal vitrines and decent lighting. We just let the works of art speak, and they did."

One question that troubles de Montebello deeply is whether his successor will be strong enough to dominate the decision-making process, as he has done, in the event that the museum continues to employ a paid president. He is not alone in his concern. Both the Art Institute of Chicago and the Philadelphia Museum of Art have tried dividing the top job between a paid president and a director, and both have settled on a single, all-powerful director. One of the few people at the Met who seem to believe wholeheartedly in the two-headed system is William H. Luers, who succeeded Macomber as president in 1986: he says the museum is so big that it requires two chief executives. "I think the dual authority works superbly for the Met," Luers said recently. "On art questions, there's no question who runs this place, but on management issues having to do with money, with personnel, with how the museum operates—these are things Philippe and I hammer out together, and it works." Luers is a former professional diplomat, like his predecessor, but he is a much more ambitious man than Macomber. Energetic, gregarious, and inclined to self-congratulation, he is an excellent fund-raiser, but no more so than de Montebello. He has made himself, in effect, the museum's chief financial officer, and has taken over the task of dealing with the city, state, and federal bureaucracies. (New York City, the Metropolitan's official landlord, currently gives the museum about sixteen million dollars a year, nearly all of it for guardianship and utilities.) Luers insists that this has freed de Montebello to concentrate on the curatorial side.

Asked whether what Luers does could not be done just as well by (for example) a vice-director for administration, who would report to the director, one staff member suggested that Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and other government officials would insist on dealing with the top man, and that de Montebello might not be comfortable in such situations. He has a point. De Montebello is not good at small talk, and he can be stiff in non-museum settings. He does more trustee-stroking than Hoving did, but the trustees respect his need for privacy—some of them, in fact, are intimidated by him. Luers cultivates his own circle of trustees—the ones who are mainly involved with the museum's financial operations. He is careful never to challenge the director on aesthetic matters, but he likes to get involved in other areas, and this sometimes leads to disagreements. When the Emperor of Japan visited New York in 1994, Luers arranged for there to be a dinner in his honor at the Metropolitan. De Montebello was opposed to this, on the ground that the dinner had nothing to do with the Met or its mission, and he refused to attend. Although both men work hard at maintaining a cordial relationship, the tension between them at meetings is sometimes so excruciating that, as one former staffer put it, "you don't know where to look." The general feeling around the museum is that when Luers retires in a year and a half (at age seventy), the command structure will be revised, discreetly, to make the director's primacy clearer.



De Montebello has made it clear that his own retirement is not imminent, and no one is being groomed to succeed him. At sixty-one, he appears very fit. Although he has been plagued for many years by back problems, he plays tennis on weekends, when he and Edith escape to their house in Bridgehampton, and he even works a little in the garden there. ("Philippe messes around with the trees," Edith says. "I mess around with the low stuff.") His closest relationships have always been with his immediate family. He sometimes regrets that he wasn't able to spend more time with his three children when they were growing up, according to Edith, and he derives enormous pleasure from playing with his first grandchild—Marc's son, Alexandre, who occasionally comes to visit him in his office at the Met. When Philippe's older brother, Georges, died of cancer last year, it was a heavy blow; Georges was his best friend. Henry de Montebello, Philippe's youngest brother, told me that although Philippe was the only one of them who married an American wife and elected to live in the United States, he has always been the "Frenchest" of the four, and Philippe talks of going back to live in France when he does retire.

His enthusiasm for the director's job has never waned. Although the Met can't get any bigger than it is now—the trustees agreed to that as a condition in order to get the city's approval of the 1970 master plan—interior changes and alterations are nearly always in progress. At the moment, the museum's south wing is partly closed for a vast, three-year reconstruction project, which will relocate the public restaurant and the executive offices (including the director's office) and provide greatly expanded gallery space for Greek and Roman art. At the other end of the museum, de Montebello recently presided over the unveiling of fourteen lavishly reconstructed galleries of Chinese painting and decorative arts. The buildup of the Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Southeast Asian art during the last two decades has been so successful that de Montebello can now say, and often does say, that the Met is the largest museum of Asian art outside Asia. "We refuse," he says, "to be a museum of ourselves."

A few years ago, de Montebello was approached by the French Ministry of Culture to see whether he would be willing to be considered for the directorship of the Louvre. He thought about it, and told them he would not. "Look," he explained to me, "I'm not personally ambitious. I've been director here for twenty years. I came here straight out of college—it was my first job. I care very deeply about making this place even better than it is—*that's* my ambition. What more could I possibly want?" ◆

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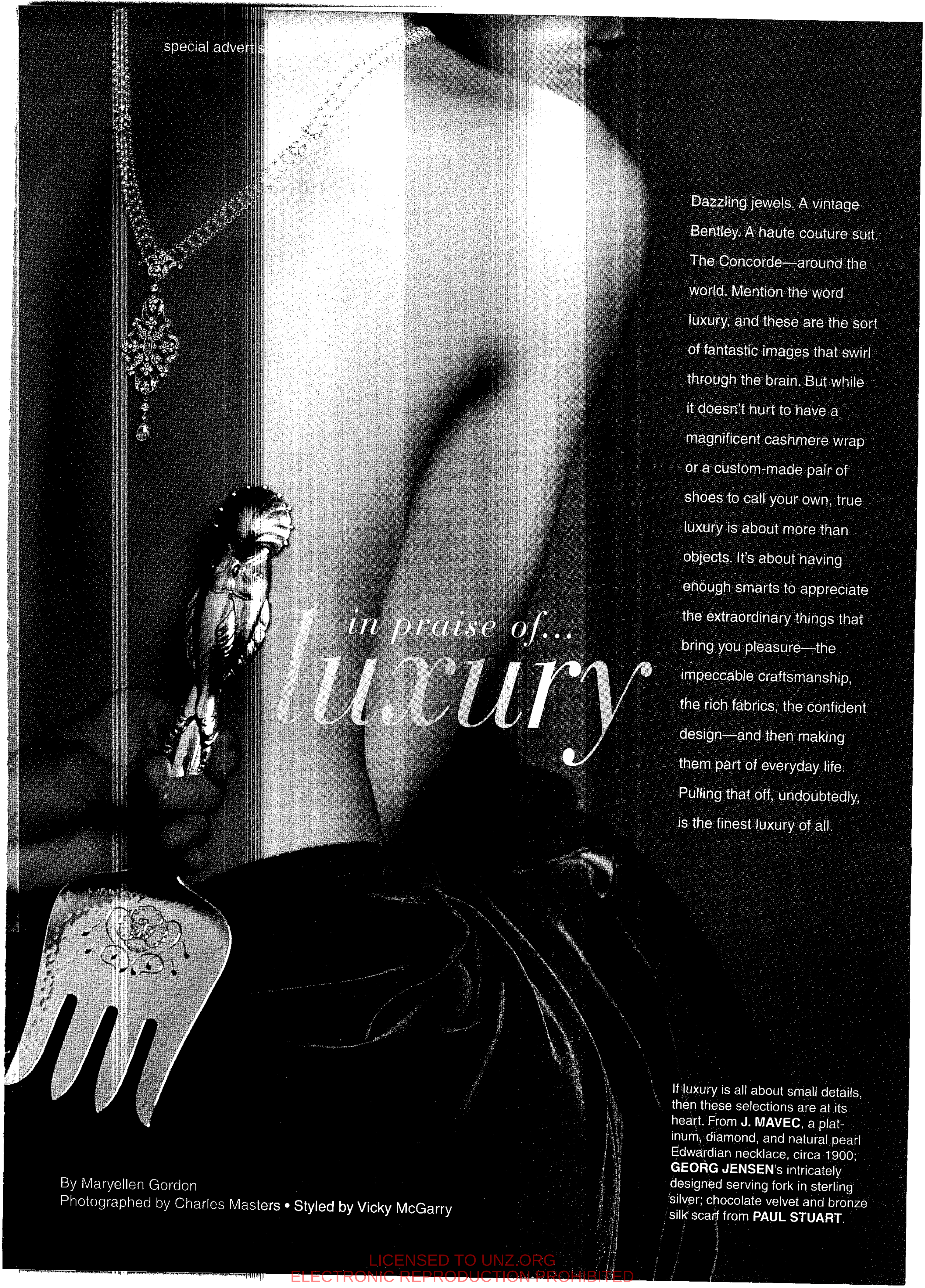

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By Maryellen Gordon
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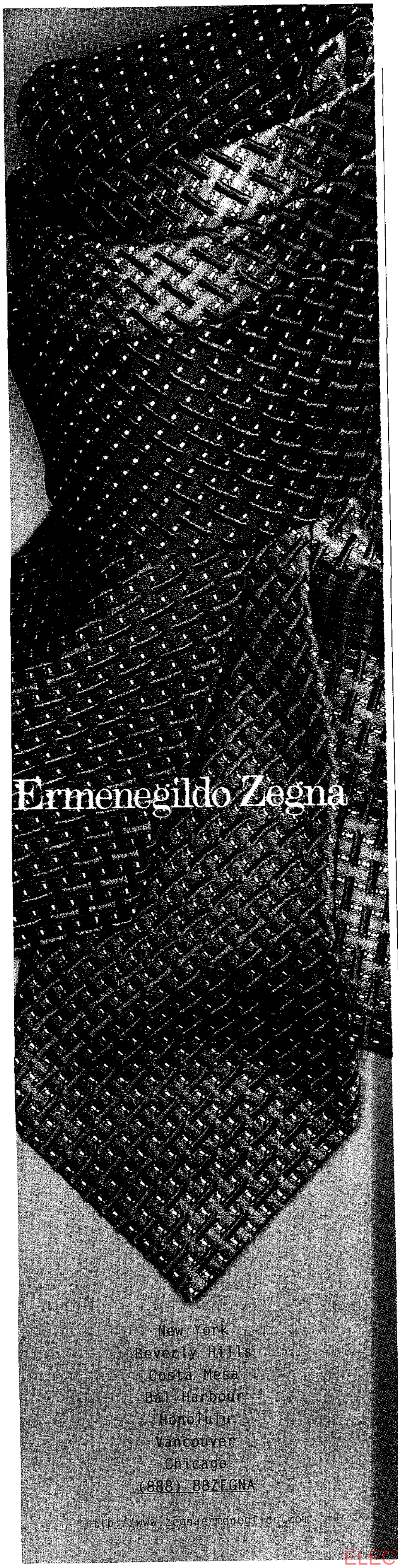

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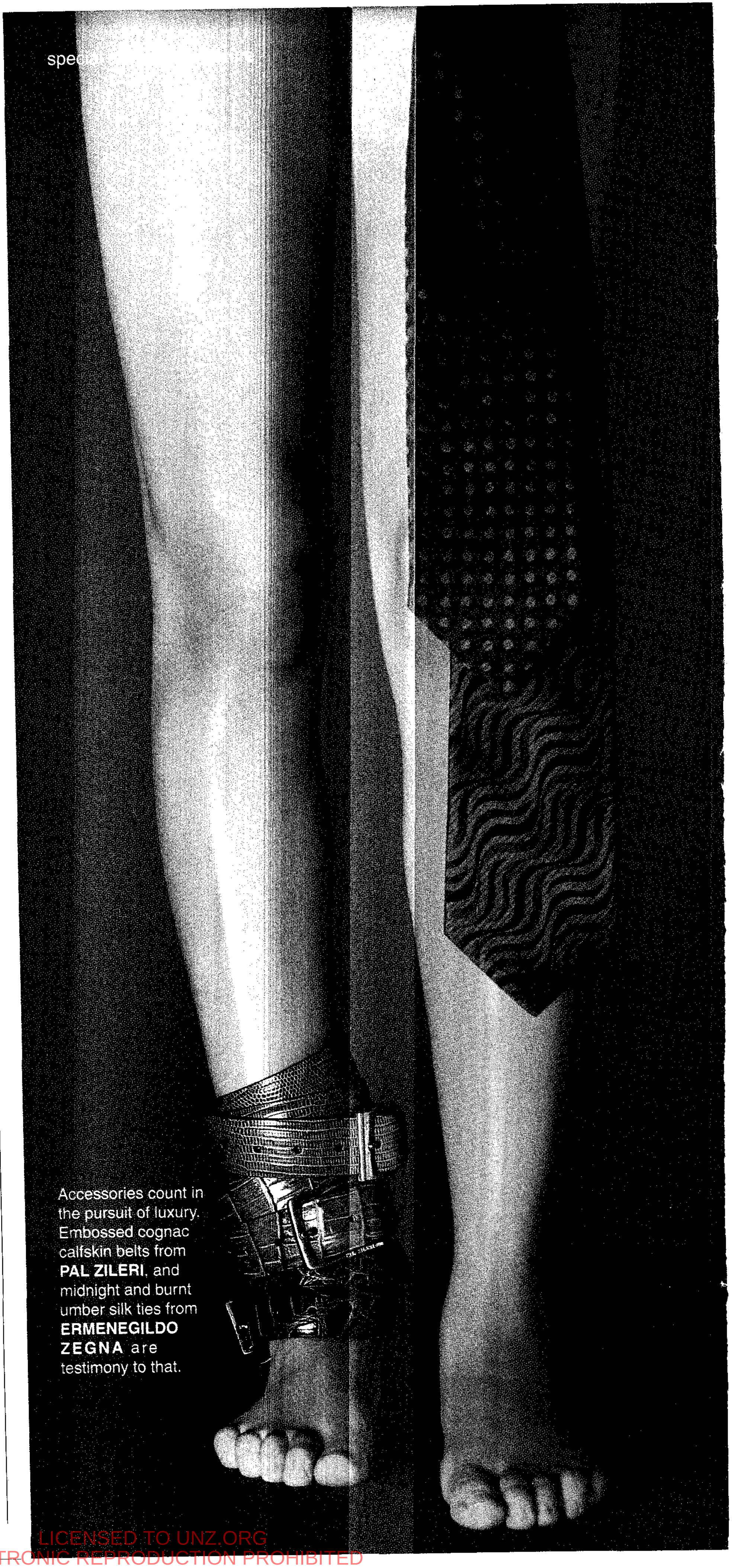

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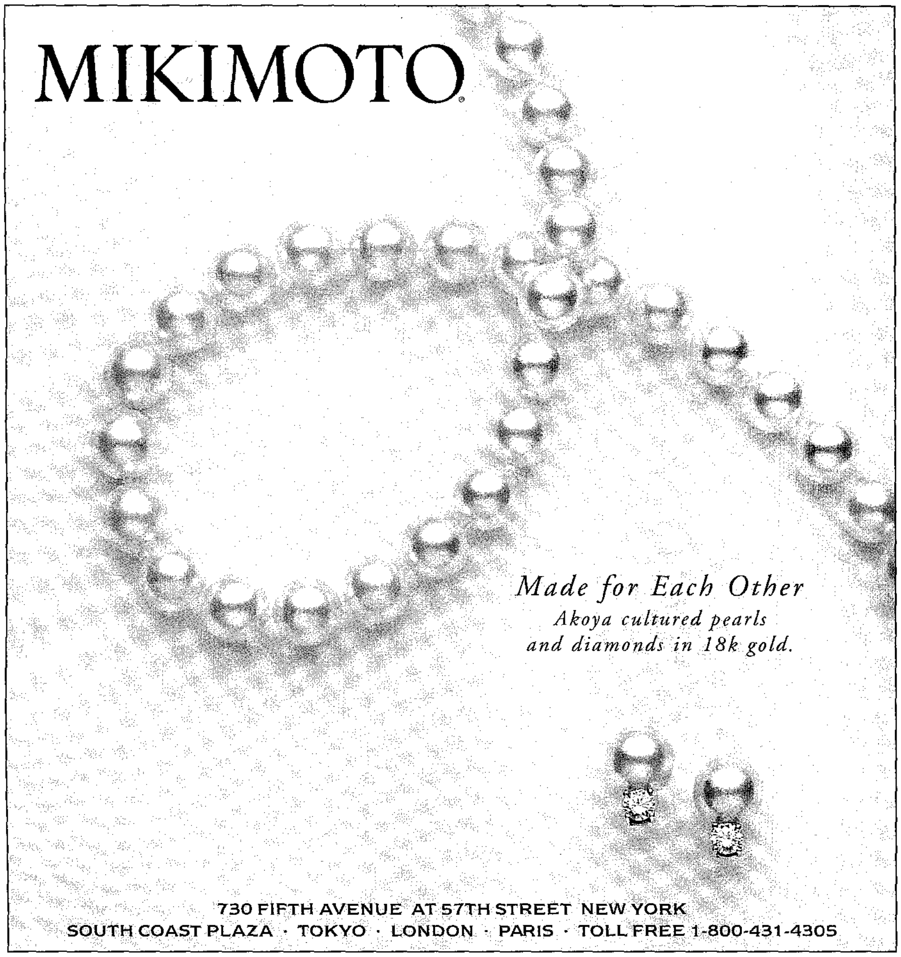
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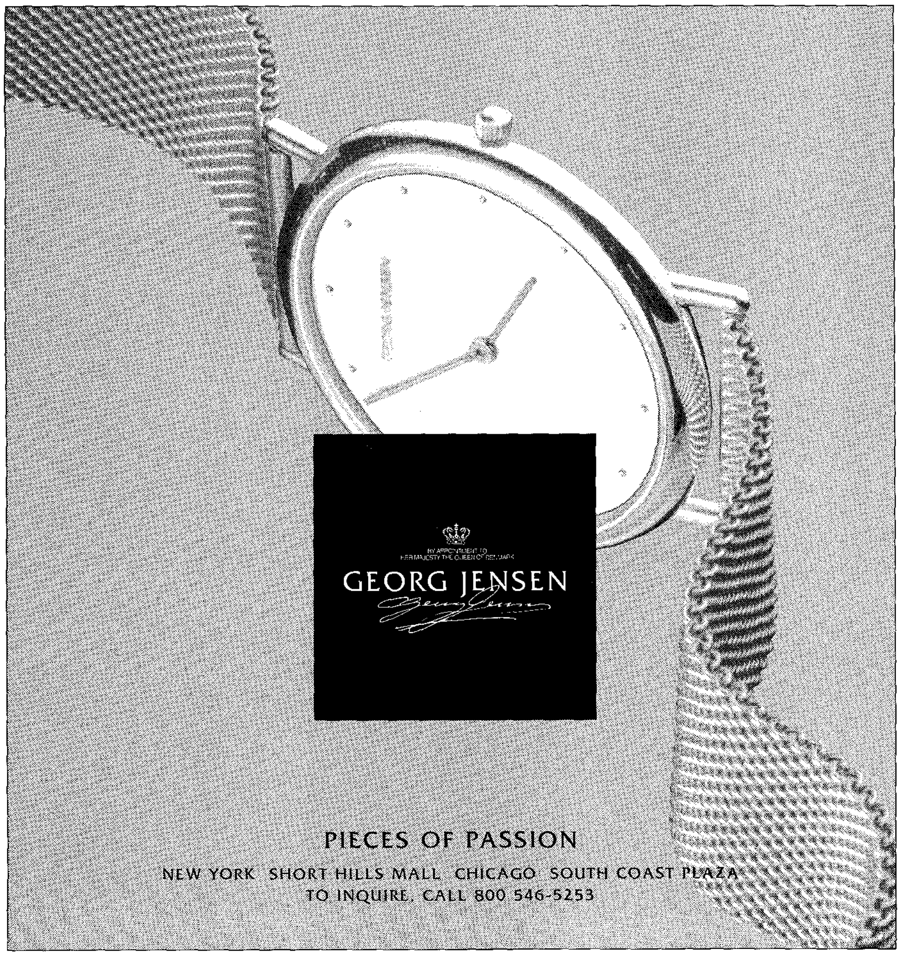
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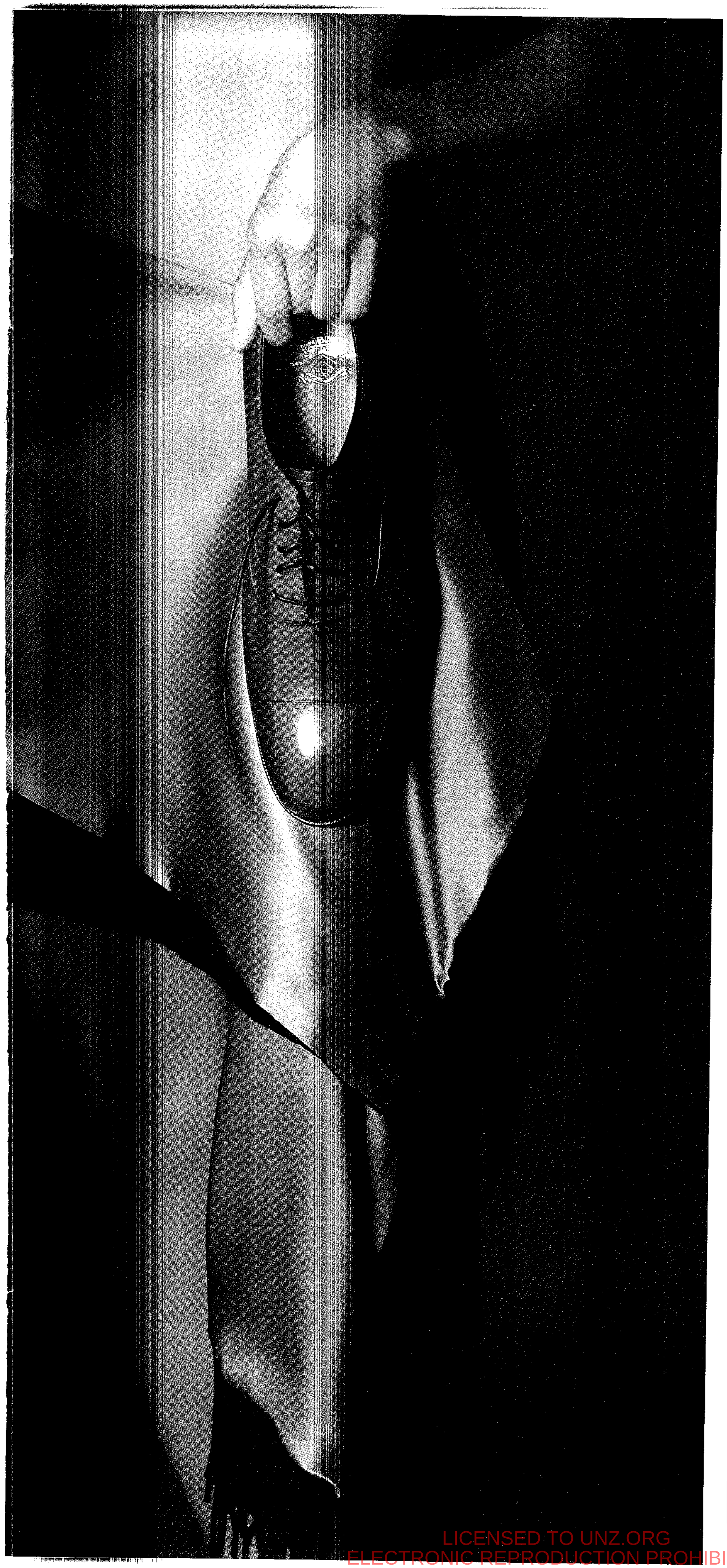

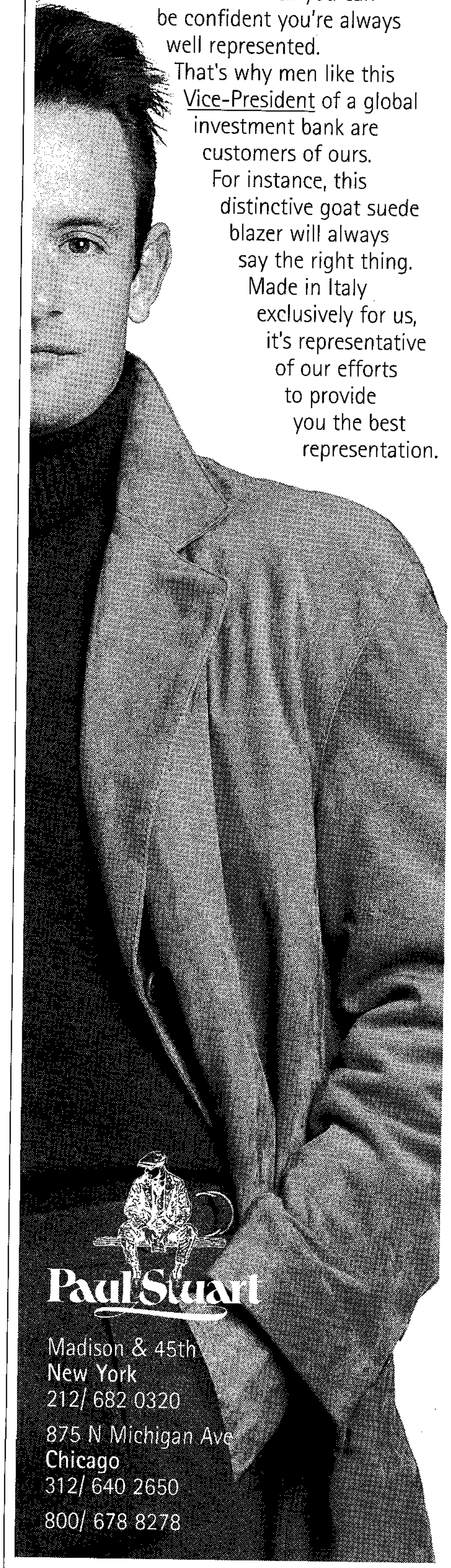

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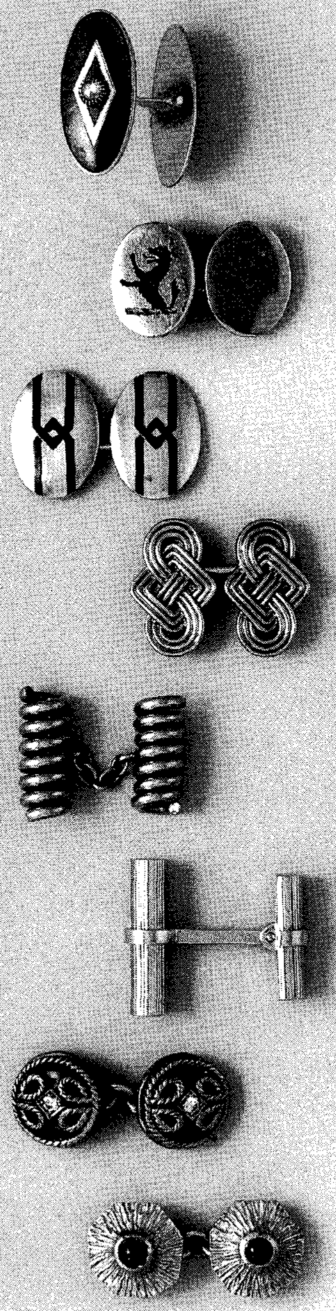

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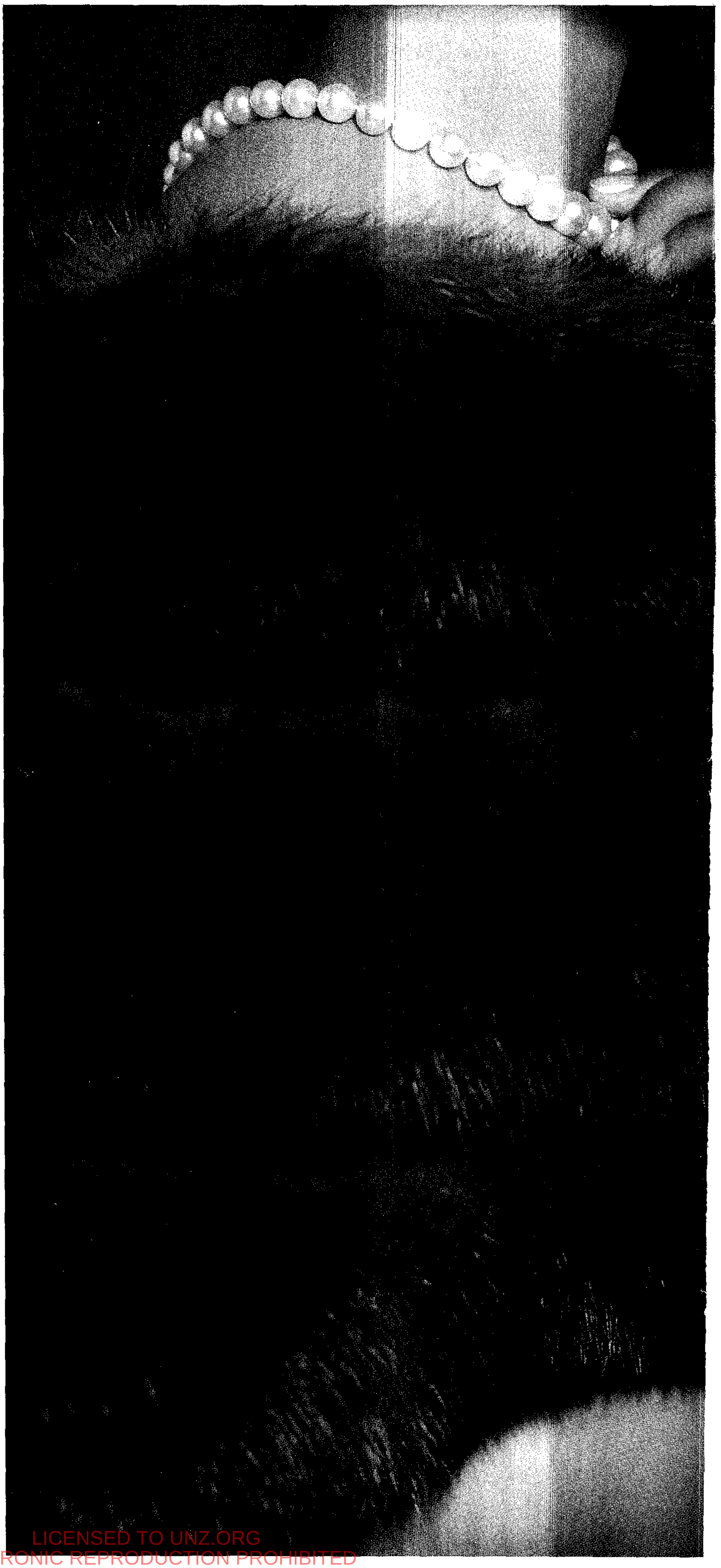

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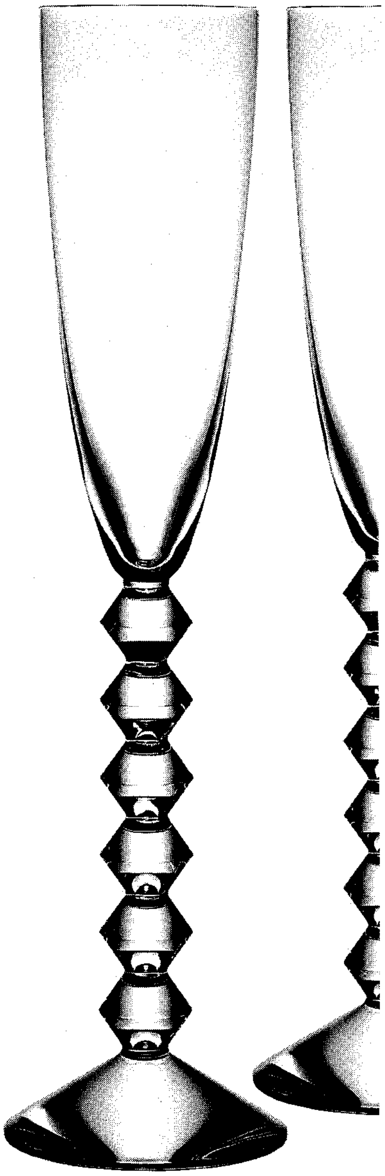

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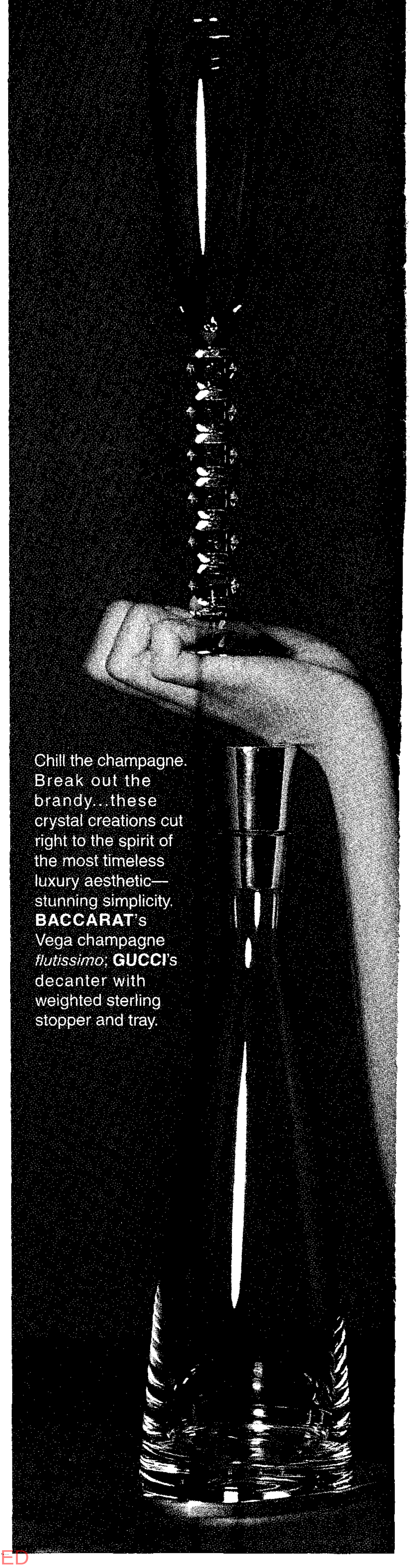

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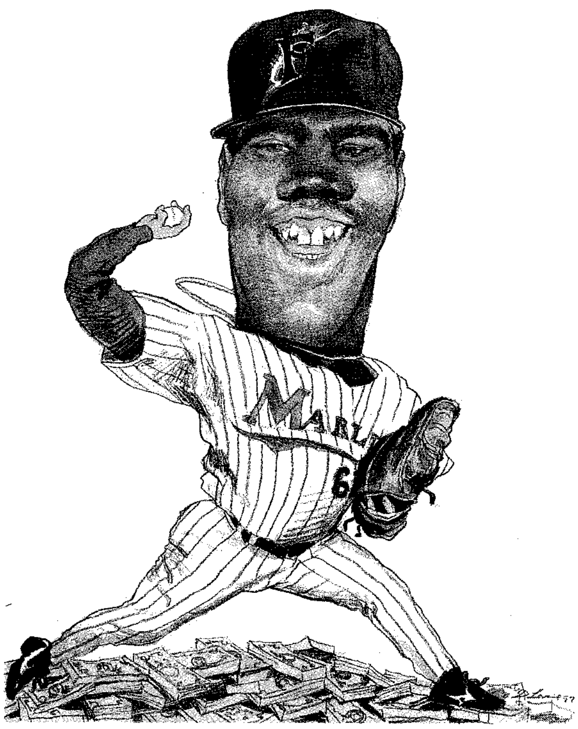
THE SPORTING SCENE

FISH STORY

The Florida Marlins and a classic seventh game brought this World Series back from the depths.

BY ROGER ANGELL

PERHAPS baseball is up-to-date after all. Once the plainest and most reassuring of our sports, an institution to which we repaired for order and continuity and a clear line to memory, it has taken to irony and alteration with an eagerness that could even recapture the attention of its lost mall-rat audience one of these days. Disorder, anyone? Look at the umpires, who are in open rebellion against their parent leagues. Before the post-season games began, the umps issued, through their union chief, Richie Phillips, an edict of instant banishment for any player or coach or manager who as much as raised an eyebrow over any of their calls, and then, taking the field, repeatedly demonstrated a new, free-form definition of the strike zone which added a refreshing element of the abstract to the batters' burdens. And where are those pennant races of yore, once as much a part of late summer as Concord grapes and pristine schoolbooks? Even for followers of teams away from the action, the speculations and tensions surrounding these unscheduled crises could mount deliciously right up until the last weekend of the season or the last Sunday (or the *next* day, if there was a tie and a playoff) before distributing their sudden portions of triumph or heartbreak. The Monday playoff at Fenway Park in 1978—the Bucky Dent game, I mean—which eliminated the Red Sox and sent the Yankees along toward their eventual World Championship, was physically painful to watch: it was like having the flu. This year, thanks to the system that breaks down both leagues into three subdivisions (designed to make weak teams look more like contenders), and the early determination of the Yankees and the Marlins as the wild-card (read second-place) teams that would make the post-season playoffs, the only vestige of a crucial series anywhere on view was a two-game Giants-Dodgers mini-event played at San Francisco's 3Com (once Candlestick) Park on September 17th and 18th, and swept by the Giants. Come to think of it, the Dodgers' late-season fold in the N.L. West may have been the most traditional baseball event of the year.



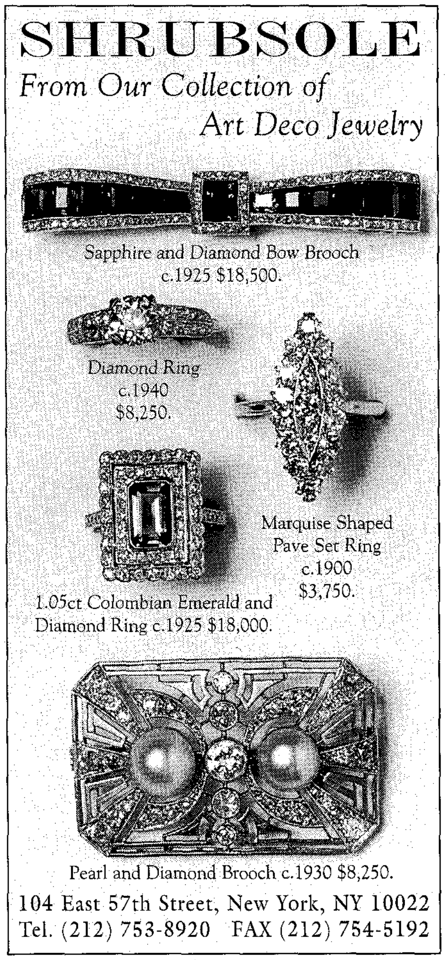
DAVID LEVINE

With his fastball and M.V.P. award, Livan Hernandez is suddenly the most famous Cuban pitcher since Fidel.

There was, to be sure, a World Series, right on schedule, and the crowning of another World Champion, baseball's ninety-third. The Florida Marlins, a five-year-old expansion team wearing teal-tinged uniforms and playing in a Miami (well, barely in Miami) football stadium, qualified for post-season play this year in spite of their finish in the National League East, nine games back of the Atlanta Braves. Eliminating the Giants and then the selfsame Braves in the divisional and championship rounds, they landed in the Series against the Cleveland Indians, and after enduring some long, late nights and some patches of gruesome play—baseball by Hieronymus Bosch—won the thing, thrillingly, in the eleventh inning of the seventh and final game. The World Champion *Marlins*? Hello?

The baseball calm that comes with the end of play has been absent this time around, and one must consider the possibility that the season just past may soon be looked back upon as a model of tranquillity and repose—a field of dreams with palms. Days after the Series ended, H. Wayne Huizenga, the bald, teal-eyed owner of the Marlins, confirmed news that he is trying to sell the club, claiming a loss of thirty million dollars a year. Meanwhile, up in Baltimore, the Orioles manager, Davey Johnson, announced his resignation on the same day that he was named American League Manager of the Year. More instability will afflict the 1998 season, since two more new teams, the Arizona Diamondbacks and the Tampa Bay Devil Rays (certainly the first big-league monickers meant to inspire queasiness), are being added to the existing twenty-eight, and last week began to fill their rosters by means of an expansion draft. Many fans, of course, would argue that big-league pitching has still not recovered from the previous expansion draft, in 1992.

Now, too, we are to have sixteen clubs in the National League and fourteen in the American—a minor realignment that will see the Milwaukee Brewers step over into what was once known as the senior circuit. The change became necessary because the arrival of one extra franchise in each league made for fifteen teams apiece—an uneven number that would require an interleague game on every day of the '98 schedule. This little awkwardness apparently went unnoticed by the owners and the baseball planners until late last spring, and even then, I'm told,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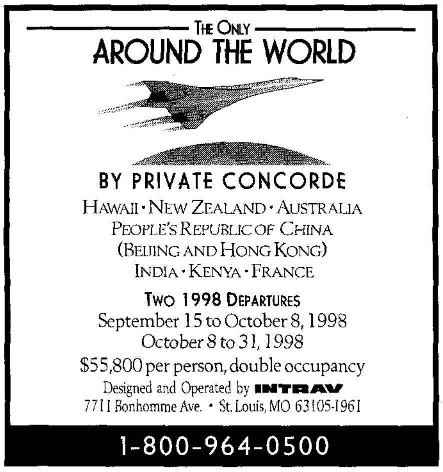
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THERE IS A GOLD LIGHT IN CERTAIN OLD PAINTINGS

I

There is a gold light in certain old paintings
That represents a diffusion of sunlight.
It is like happiness, when we are happy.
It comes from everywhere and from nowhere at once, this light,
 And the poor soldiers sprawled at the foot of the cross
 Share in its charity equally with the cross.

II

Orpheus hesitated beside the black river.
With so much to look forward to, he looked back.
We think he sang then, but the song is lost.
At least he had seen once more the beloved back.
 I say the song went this way: *O prolong*
 Now the sorrow if that is all there is to prolong.

III

The world is very dusty, Uncle. Let us work.
One day the sickness shall pass from the earth for good.
The orchard will bloom; someone will play the guitar.
Our work will be seen as strong and clean and good.
 And all that we suffered from having existed
 Shall be forgotten as though it had never existed.

—DONALD JUSTICE

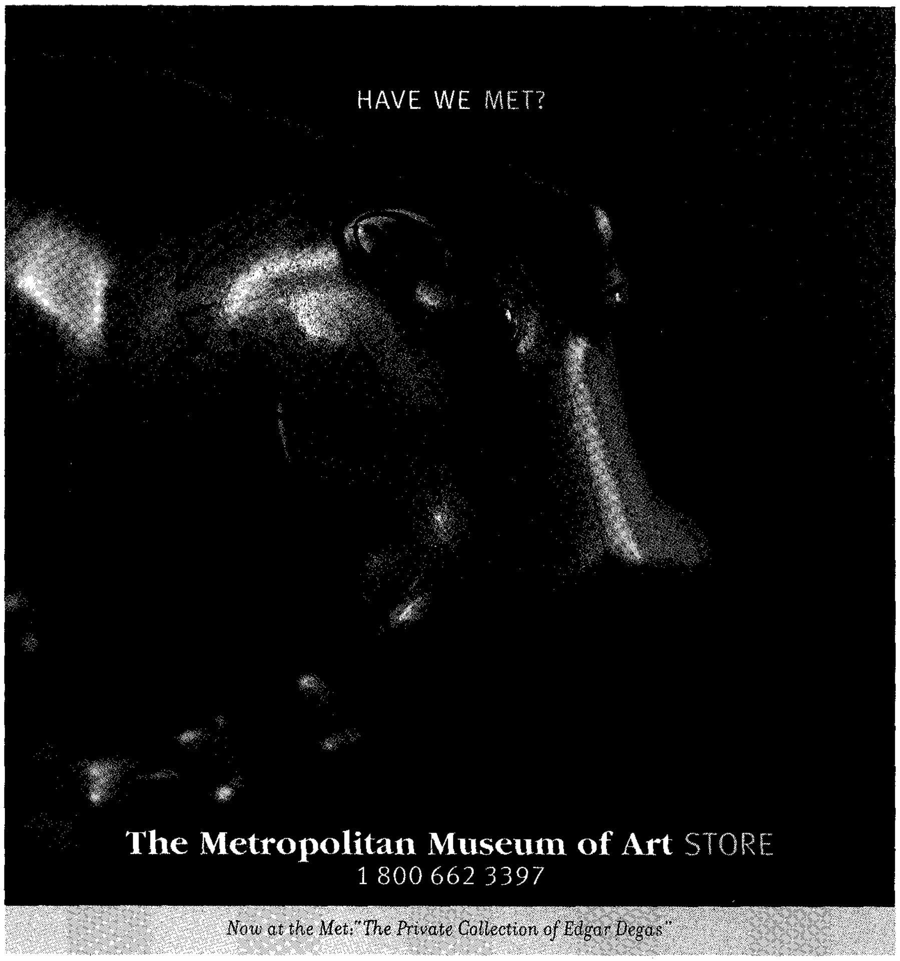
the Odd-Team Conundrum appeared to baffle some of the better or richer baseball minds of our generation. The one-club switchover within the ancient leagues fortunately tabled an earlier realignment proposal, of intergalactic proportions: the mass transfer of *seven* teams to the opposite league; the establishment of two National League divisions on the West Coast; and, except for brief interleague visits, the disestablishment of all American League baseball west of Kansas City. This scheme is expected to resurface next year, for it is reported to be compellingly attractive to the owners—and thus, at last, perhaps beyond the powers of explanation.

Before the Marlins prevailed, I kept hearing fan friends complain that Wayne Huizenga (he built Blockbuster Video and Waste Management International, and is the owner of the National Football League's Miami Dolphins and the National Hockey League's Florida Panthers) had bought this pennant last winter, when he shelled out ninety-five million dollars to bring aboard six high-ticket, free-agent veteran stars, including the All-Star sluggers Bobby Bonilla and Moises Alou, along with Jim Leyland, the erstwhile skipper of the Pirates. Well, yes, I had to agree: this is what owners *do*, and, even if one doesn't like the principle, it's hard to argue with the results. The Yankees' payroll of $65,499,577 was the largest in baseball this year, and the other four clubs exceeding fifty million dollars in salaries were the Orioles, Indians, Marlins, and Braves: the same four who got to compete in the championship playoffs this time around.

The bought-pennant beef wasn't heard much after the Series ended, perhaps because of Huizenga's long soak in a Jacuzzi of red ink; already the new champions are being dismantled, in the name of economy, with the club trading away Alou (and his five-million-dollar-a-year salary) to the Houston Astros. In spite of these expensive imported stars, this year's Marlins were a close-knit and emotional bunch, and many of the most visible players in the mix—among them the towering, heavy-faced rookie starter Livan Hernandez (the Cuban defector who became such a central figure for the club late this year) and the shortstop Edgar Renteria, both of them twenty-two years old, and the remarkable catcher Charles Johnson—were homegrown talent, developed or acquired by the unusually enterprising baseball organization put together by the Marlins general manager, Dave Dombrowski.

What did matter this fall, and what everyone must have noticed, was the major role played in this Series by Latin-American players—a vivid exemplar of the historic shift that has transformed the face of the game. Fifteen players in the games were Latino, including Hernandez and Renteria (who is from Colombia); the Puerto Rican Sandy Alomar, Jr.; the Dominicans Manny Ramirez and Tony Fernandez; and the Venezuelan Omar Vizquel—not to mention the American-born Moises Alou and Bobby Bonilla. When Edgar Renteria rounded first base after whacking the Series-winning single in the eleventh inning of the seventh game, spreading his arms and tilting into a boyish and exultant airplane turn back toward his teammates, you had the feeling that he was also zooming off into baseball's future. Across the Caribbean and Latin America (and in parts of the Bronx), the game has lost none of its lustre, and I wonder how many owners picked up on the news, just the other day, that in Colombia kids' teams are now taking the field with every player bearing the identical number 16 on his back: Renteria's number. With baseball bottoming out on the charts in white suburbia, with diamonds everywhere giving way to malls or soccer fields, with very few African-Americans coming into the game (or into the stands: far less of them than one saw there even before Jackie Robinson's time), this is the realignment that matters.

THE bad news came early for the Yankees, and crashed the party. David Cone, starting against the Indians in the opening game of the American League divisional playoffs—the first step in their awaited post-season defense of the 1996 World Championship—sur-



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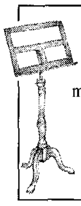
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rendered five runs in the top of the first inning, up at the Stadium, where the anticipatory roars of happiness over the arrival of another Oktoberfest of high-level Bronxian drama fell abruptly into a thick, low gabble of anxiety and foreboding. Yankee fans are a tough, sophisticated audience, and it wasn't just that little rush of runs surrendered by their ace that bothered them so but the evidence, soon to be borne out, that his arm was not sound. The suave, confident Yanks actually won this game, 8–6, capping their comeback with three consecutive home runs in the sixth—back to back to *back*—but Cone was finished for the year. Cone is a quality article, and he stood up to the post-game questions in the clubhouse in his customary style, but I noticed that he had retreated a step or two and was standing almost inside his cubicle. He had the look of a man trying to stare down his future.

Now he has undergone arthroscopic surgery for the removal of frayed tissue in his pitching arm. This was a relatively minor procedure compared with the operation he went through last year to repair an aneurysm in that same shoulder, and he expects to be ready to go back to work when spring training arrives. No one knows whether two operations, twenty-two hundred and sixty lifetime innings, and more than thirty thousand major-league pitches have worn him down at last.

The loss of Cone in the playoffs—his presence as much as his pitching—seemed to shrivel the Yankees a little. They played poorly the next evening, surrendering a three-run lead when an error and a butchered line drive in left field brought in five Indian runs and cost the game. Back on top after David Wells's five-hitter and Paul O'Neill's grand slam took care of the third game, out at Jacobs Field, in Cleveland, the Yanks led again the next evening and were four outs away from the divisional championship when Sandy Alomar, the élite Cleveland catcher—the *other* Alomar—drove a Mariano Rivera fastball to right and into the stands, tying the game at 2–2. There isn't much of a lesson to be found here—Rivera's signature pitch is the high fastball, and Alomar had been forced to go the wrong way with this one, against his power—but

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A: When he's an INTERNAUT. (A NETIZEN communicates on line. A NEWBIE is a beginner at it, and an INTERNAUT does it all the time.)

Q: When is a **SPIDER** like a **ROBOT?**

A: When it's an INTELLIGENT AGENT. (All three are ways to search the Internet.)

Q: How do you use a **MANDELBROT SET?**

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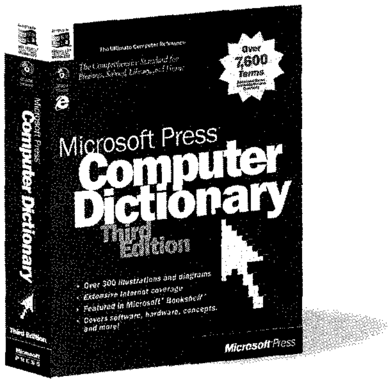
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the blow changed everything. The Indians won in the ninth, on a deflected single by Omar Vizquel, and eliminated the old champs, 4–3, the next night, in a game decided, all in all, back in the third inning, when Andy Pettitte failed to cover first base.

Remembering a new baseball aphorism I'd heard from David Wells ("It's glory, or you're a dog"), I tried to console myself with Paul O'Neill's eight hits, and with the splendid show we'd been given in the fourth game, when two old warriors, Orel Hershiser and Doc Gooden, went head to head for a few innings, like something out of Cecil B. De Mille. It hurt more than I'd expected to watch the Yanks lose. I'm not a real Yankee fan, but Joe Torre's team had won me over with their spirited play and their unexpected sweetness last year, and this year as well, and when they fell behind in the second game, I had looked around the Stadium like a kid—the full-up stands, the quirky way Derek Jeter snatches the ball straight back out of his mitt before getting off his peg to first, and the way Paul O'Neill, striking out or popping up, slams both elbows into his ribs as he twists away: O'Neill Agonistes—and tried to get used to the idea that such sights might not be available here for me again this year. We forget the assurance and warmth that flow into us from a championship home team, and the confidence with which we expect, deep in our baby-fan hearts, that these guys will know how to do it all over again this time, in spite of the odds. There is every evidence that this won't happen, of course, if only because luck plays such a giant hand in these October doings, but we are incorrigible. Somebody else will be fooled by this nonsense next year—the Marlins fans may get it badly, since they're so new at winning—but still we want it back again and wish it were us.

WITH the overstuffed post-season now offering us thirty or forty games to remember forever, we must settle for a glinting or impressionistic view of some of this year's late happenings: Randy Johnson's unexpected two losses to the Orioles during the Mariners' swift elimination; some outlandish baserunning and defense exhibited by the Braves; and the Braves'

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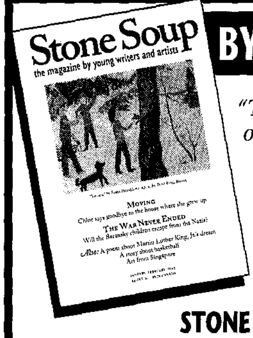
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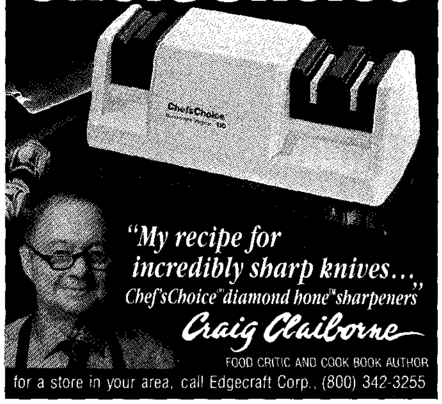
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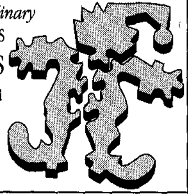
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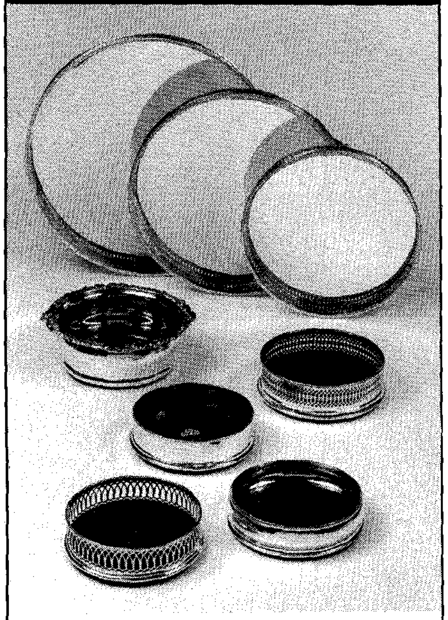

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magisterial Greg Maddux falling twice to the Marlins. In the fifth game of the N.L. Championships, Livan Hernandez, given an unexpected start against Maddux, quickly perceived a Moon Riverish breadth to home-plate umpire Eric Gregg's strike zone, and poured his steamy fastballs and swooping curves along its outer banks all night, striking out fifteen batters—the last one (Fred McGriff) on an unreachable, unbelievable called third strike, away. "My strike zone has been the same for twenty years," Gregg said merrily in his dressing room. Judge Roy Bean could not have put it better.

The Orioles found unexpected ways to lose as well. Their glowering ace Mike Mussina, a master of the knuckle-curveball, struck out fifteen Indians in his first championship outing (helped no end by the late-afternoon shadows at Jacobs Field) and ten more in his next try, giving up three hits and one run over a combined sixteen innings—all to no avail. Each time, his reliever gave up the killing late run, the second being that electrifying eleventh-inning, sixth-game homer by Tony Fernandez, which eliminated the O's, 1–0. Baltimore manager Davey Johnson has a careworn expression and a mouth that often comes slightly ajar, as if preparing itself to cry "Oh, *no!*" Watching him in televised closeups (I was at home) while the Orioles inflicted deadly damage on themselves in three successive games—a late three-run homer coughed up by his closer, Armando Benitez; a fatal passed ball; and then a weird combined wild pitch and catcher's error, good for three enemy runs—I detected a change: now he looked like "The Scream."

BECAUSE the Marlins and the Indians kept winning alternate games, following the Marlins' opening 7–4 victory, this World Series produced illusory glimmers of interest. It was a Series that repeatedly went flat because of slovenly play, sporadic bursts and lulls in offense, and feeble pitching by the starters—and, yes, because of its very late hours—but then revived itself with a culminating game of breathtaking tension and release: the sports thrill that only baseball can provide. I had determined to follow this fall classic from a comfortable distance, and congratulated myself when

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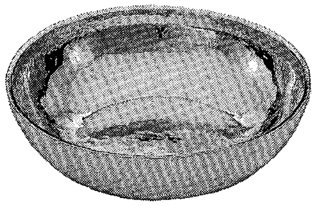

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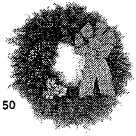

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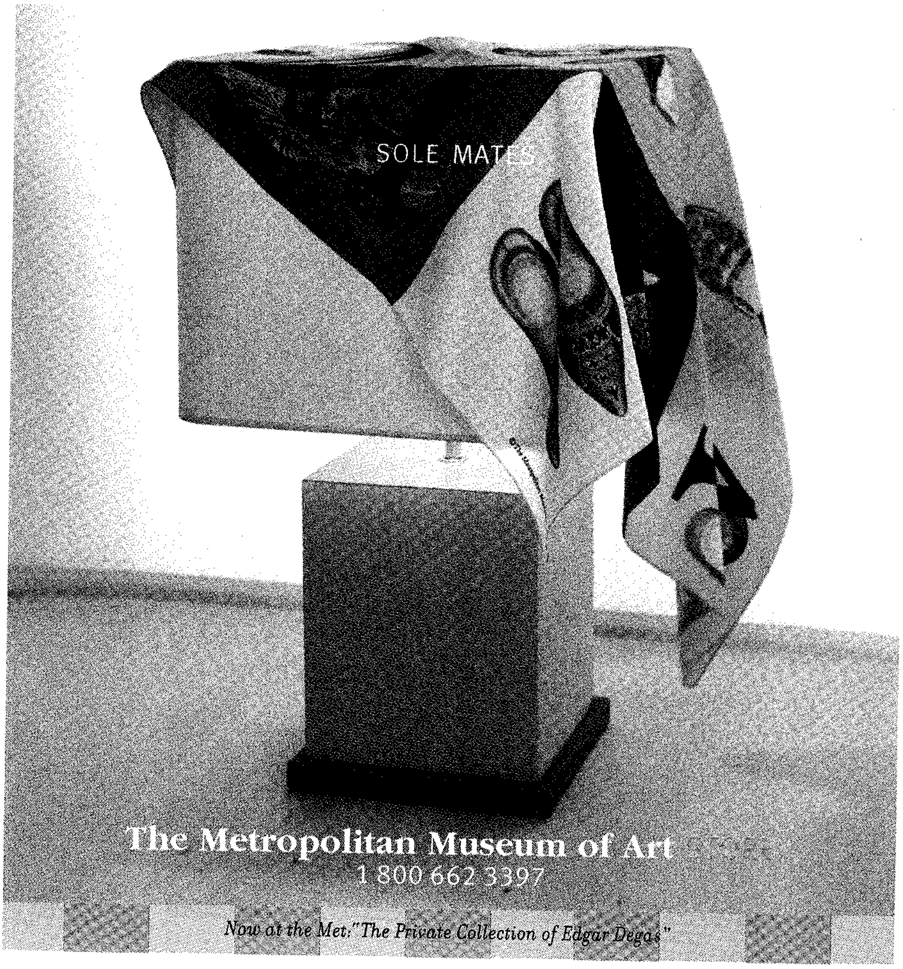
I saw how drab and uninviting the early games had begun to appear. Televised baseball, particularly at the network level, provides the little spark of detail that can brighten these stretches: the dying slo-mo spin of a hanging slider from Orel Hershiser, wincingly reborn on my screen for an instant before Marlins catcher Charles Johnson takes it deep into the upper-left-field deck at Pro Player Stadium, for example. Watching replays of Hernandez's pitches, seen from behind the mound, I noticed that he finishes his down-driving motion with a dancing Ali sidestep that snaps him upright, with both hands cocked in front of his chest, preparing to parry. Later, in the fifth game, the camera followed him back to his dugout after an inning in which he had given up a three-run homer to Sandy Alomar. Raging, he threw his hat, kicked at something, flung himself about: he was a baby after all. Yo, *Livan!* Instantly he was surrounded by Marlins coaches, teammates, interpreters, talking to him nose to nose, gesturing, staring into his eyes. He sat down alone, quieted himself, squared his cap, settled something inside. Then he went back out and got rid of the next twelve Indian batters without incident. "We've seen what Livan Hernandez is made of," Joe Morgan, the NBC analyst, said.

Morgan, who works for ESPN during the regular season, is the distinguished former Cincinnati second baseman and Hall of Famer, and now he has become an eminence—perhaps the eminence—in his new field. He talks less than his compeers, I notice, and instinctively avoids the bullshit and bonhomie that so afflict the trade. Wisdom comes tersely from him, sometimes as maxim, sometimes as art criticism. "You can't exactly think along with Greg Maddux," I heard him murmur once while observing the Braves' master mixer at work. Speaking of some batter's plight during the Series, he said, "With the curve, you have to wait. With the slider, you have to wait and *be quick.*"

I think Morgan is a classicist at heart. "He made the correct approach," he likes to point out just after a batter has swung or while an infielder is turning the double play, and he always rises to the Sophoclean situation. In the fifth game of the N.L. Championship playoffs,



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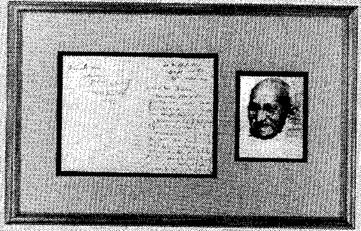
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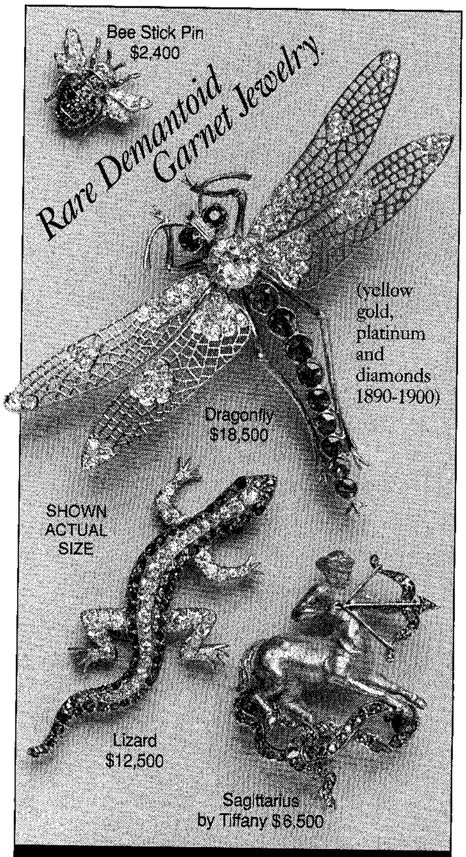

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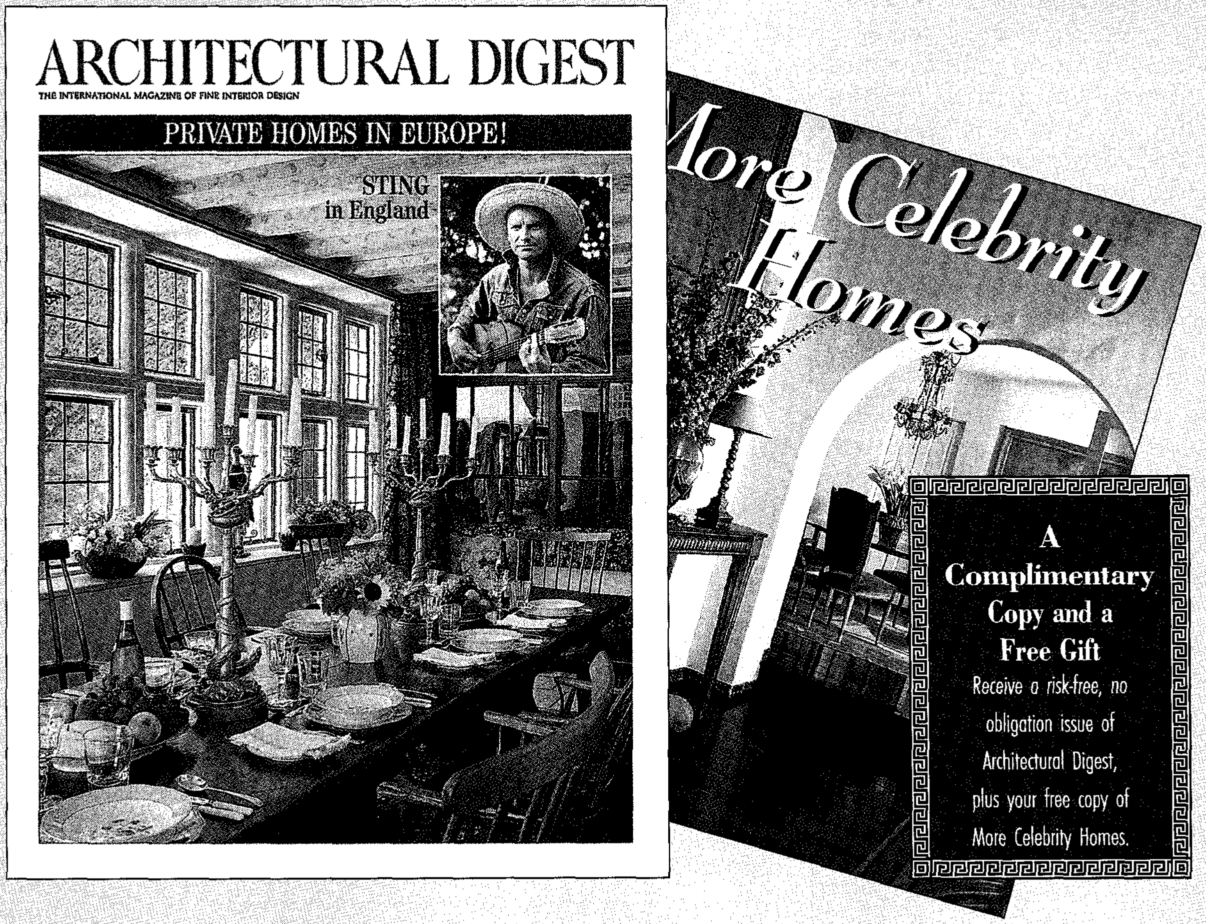
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ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

when the Braves' Kenny Lofton got to first base in the eighth, with his team down a run against the Marlins, Morgan grew excited. "He's *got* to steal here," he said. "He's supposed to be a great base stealer, and now he's got to do it, no matter what. Now we'll see!" In time, Lofton did go, and was thrown out on a great play when Renteria, the Florida shortstop, blocked the bag with his knee and made the tag. Morgan forgave Kenny, I *think*. Sometimes it must be tough to have Jove watching, up there in the booth.

HARD at work from my front-row World Series couch, I was happy to be nowhere near Jacobs Field for Game Three, which began in intermittent rain off Lake Erie, with a wind-chill factor dropping into the twenties, but as its grisly and monstrous events unfolded themselves across the hours, pangs of remorse began to chew at me. The grand old pastime appeared to be in extremis, and I wanted to be at the bedside. Even the box-score numbers—twenty-five runs, twenty-six hits, six errors, seventeen bases on balls—cannot convey the deep ugliness of this beast. Each of the starters—Al Leiter for the Marlins, Charles Nagy for the Indians—walked a batter with the bases loaded, forcing in a run. Leiter walked four in one inning, in fact, but was outgophered by Nagy, three to one. Eleven runs were scored in the ninth inning alone (long after Leiter and Nagy were gone), converting a 7–7 tie into the tedious and infamous 14–11 Marlins win.

Nothing can be done when an Ebola virus like this afflicts the principals, but this time the anxiously awaited signs of a pitching revival were slow to arrive. Game Four, played amid snow flurries and the sound of bats shattering in the Arctic chill, brought fifteen safe knocks by the Indians—the same total rung up by the visitors the next night, when Hershiser, battered for the second time in the Series, lowered his earned-run average in these games to 11.70. To put this another way, the Indians scored twenty-nine runs in their three home games, and contrived to lose two of them.

The revival, a crisp, everyday 4–1 win for the Tribe, back in Miami, featured the play of the month: a darting airborne dive by their splendid shortstop Omar

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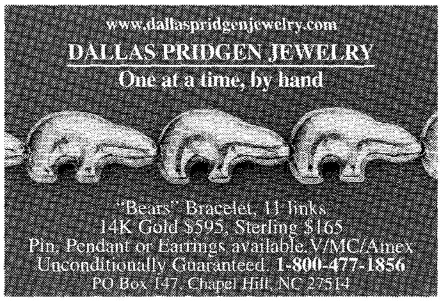

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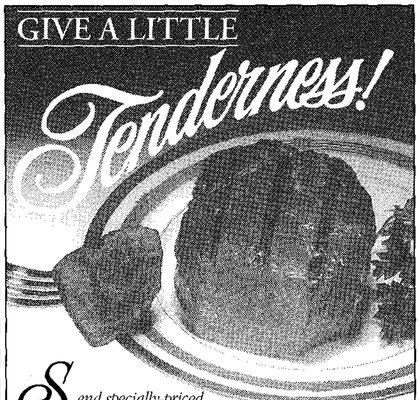

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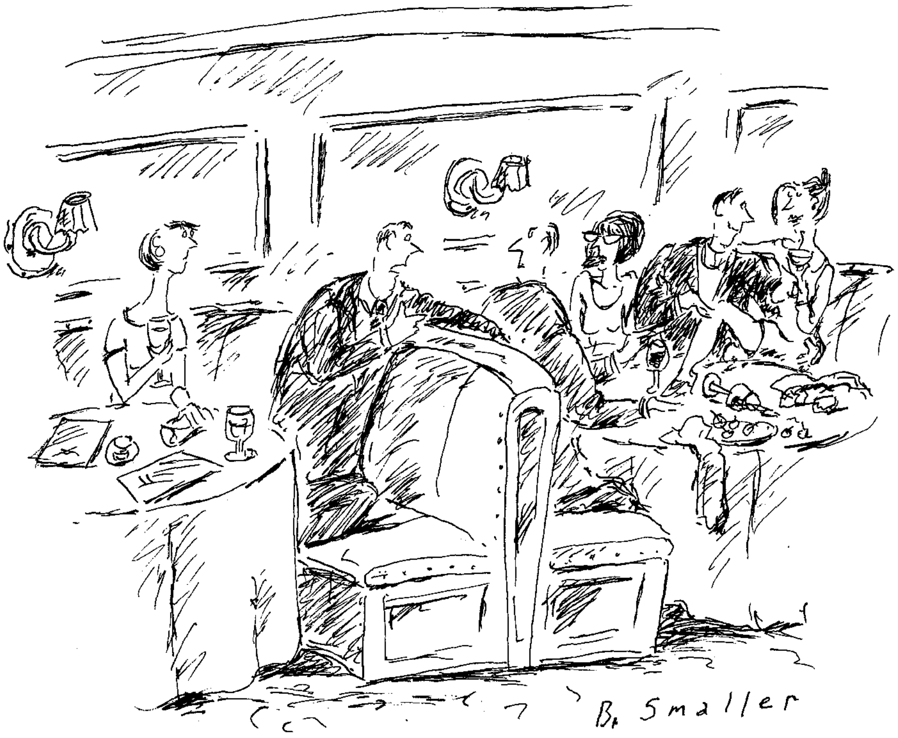
Vizquel, which saved two certain runs. Baseball had returned, and even before it was played, the concluding seventh game—a jewel of greatest price, it turned out—felt like a gift for our pains. Fans across the country, noticing at last, clicked on to the drama, running up a brisk 24.5 rating, which outdid the N.B.A.'s championship finale, back in June, by six full points.

Stuffed with meaning and danger, the game moved quickly but went on forever: four hours and ten minutes, without a whisper of complaint anywhere. Jaret Wright, the thick-necked rookie fastballer who had already won three games in the post-season, threw hard in defense of the Indians' early two-run lead, while matched against the jittery Leiter, who, teetering along the rim of disaster, produced three magnificent inning-ending strikeouts. In the seventh inning, the extended crisis was handed over to the bullpens, whose various character actors—among them the grungy Paul Assenmacher and the scary Mike Jackson (his cap pulled down to his eyebrows) for the visitors, and the whey-faced Dennis Cook and the boy-giant Antonio Alfonseca for the Floridas—we knew so well by now. The game had taken on the stretched-out, sensual anxiety that only late, close baseball can produce—you want to laugh, you want it to be over, you want more—along with the growing conviction that a resolution of almost moral proportions will be required at the end. Bobby Bonilla's leadoff homer brought the Marlins to within a run in the seventh, and they tied it at last—you knew it would happen—on a couple of ninth-inning singles and a classy one-out sacrifice fly from Craig Counsell, given up by the Indians' closer, Jose Mesa. The ending, in the eleventh, came in a little cascade of shocks: a single; an error by second baseman Tony Fernandez, who saw a harmless grounder flick off his mitt as Bonilla paused before him on the baseline; and then, an out later, the mini-hit by Renteria, looped up the middle and just over pitcher Charles Nagy's lunge—that delivered Counsell, galloping home, into the celebrations.

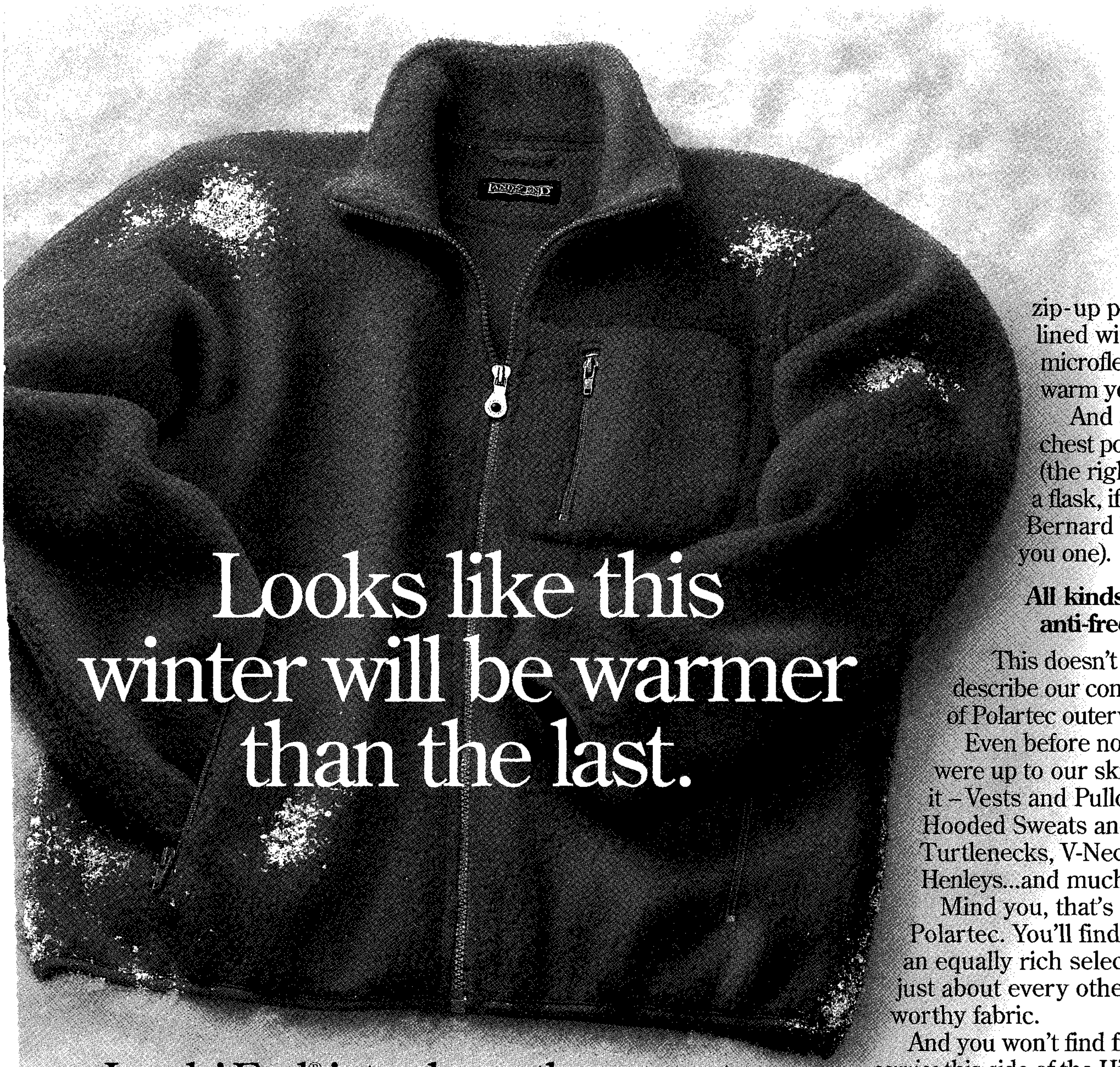
Fernandez, always a supremely cool and self-assured infielder (he was the long-term All-Star shortstop with the Blue Jays), had assured himself the Most Valuable Player award if the Indians had won; he was batting .471 for the Series, and his hit in the third inning had brought home both of the big Cleveland runs. Back in the playoffs, his solo homer had finished the Orioles. Now, after a remarkable stretch of high-level performance, he found himself flung into the darkest corner of limbo, in sudden company with Fred Snodgrass and Bill Buckner: what will be remembered about him forever is that he cost his team a World Series. This is cruel but not unfair, for in baseball nothing is forgiven. As Fernandez and every professional knows, the only thing that matters is the coming play: what you do next.

I hadn't been quite sure whom I was rooting for in this series, and for much of the distance I wanted it to be the Indians. They had lost the 1995 Series against the Braves with a better team than this one, but then their general manager, John Hart, had unloaded the unbearable Albert Belle, along with Carlos Baerga, and was now about to win with these kinder, gentler Indians. The Cleveland fans, who had gone without a championship since 1948, had turned out in vast numbers—every game at Jacobs Field this year was a sellout—and were clearly more deserving than the Marlins' fair-weather rooters. Florida fans have been around for only five years—a soup course, as suffering is measured.

Against this I could only balance Jim Leyland, my own and everybody else's favorite hard-luck manager and character-builder: a worn-down chain-smoker and truthteller, thirty-four years in the business, who had shown astounding patience in the course of these games, staying with Hernandez in the fifth game and with Leiter in the seventh, and, perhaps more surprisingly, with his third baseman, Bonilla, who had pulled a hamstring at the end of the playoffs. Each gamble or insight had paid off (Bobby Bo, after that homer, had started things off again in the eleventh with a single), perfectly demonstrating the value of wisdom, as against the power of luck, in big games, or vice versa. In the early nineties, Leyland had come agonizingly close to the World Series with his spirited Pirate teams, twice losing after carrying a lead into the final inning of the championships. The instant that trifling ground ball got away from Tony Fernandez, I flashed back to a ninth inning in 1992 in Atlanta, when an almost identical inexplicable error by Leyland's own second baseman, Jose Lind, cracked the door for the Braves' winning, heartrending three-run rally. This time things went the other way. ◆



"Yeah, well, the quality of your life is interfering with the quality of my life."



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ANNALS OF CRIME

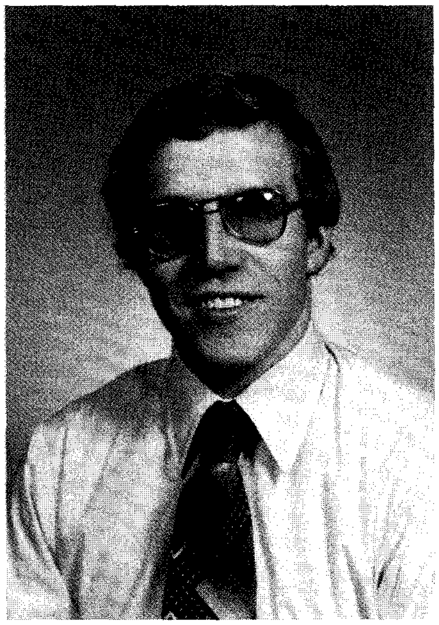
PROFESSIONAL COURTESY

Michael Swango is a convicted poisoner and a suspected serial killer. He's also a physician. Why have hospitals across the country repeatedly put patients in his care?

BY JAMES B. STEWART

A FEW weeks ago, I called on Dennis Cashman, the presiding judge for Adams County, Illinois, in his chambers in Quincy, a city of about forty thousand people on the banks of the Mississippi. Quincy is my home town, and I have known Judge Cashman, who is fifty-two, and his family most of my life. He is tall, with sandy close-cropped hair, and, except for the addition of a few pounds, looks much as he did thirty years ago, when I knew him as the reigning city golf champion. He had telephoned me a few days earlier, urging me to meet with him to discuss a case that has preoccupied him for twelve years.

In 1985, the Judge had presided over the trial of a young Quincy doctor named Michael Swango, who was convicted of poisoning five co-workers at Quincy's Blessing Hospital. The victims, who had worked closely with Swango and had considered him a friend, provided compelling testimony against him. Cashman was struck by the incongruity between the defendant and his alleged crime. Swango, an engaging thirty-year-old with blond hair, hazel eyes, and a broad, friendly smile, had been the valedictorian of his high-school class and had completed an interneship in surgery at Ohio State University. As a principal witness in his own defense, he had been articulate and likable, but the evidence in the case had been conclusive: Swango had given his victims varying doses of arsenic, not with the intention of killing them, the Judge surmised, but simply to study their reactions. Cashman had sentenced him to prison for the maximum term allowed—five years. Nevertheless, Swango was paroled in 1987, and soon attempted to resume his medical career. Cashman recalled receiving a number of inquiries from hospitals, medical schools, and placement services after Swango's release. "They said he'd applied for a residency. I told them he was a diabolical criminal, who should not practice medicine again." But many members of the medical profession did not call Judge Cashman or otherwise investigate Swango's multiple felony convictions—even when Swango informed them of his criminal record. Between 1987 and 1996, he worked as a paramedic in Virginia and in medical residencies and hospitals in South Dakota, New York, and Africa.



Swango in 1979: The F.B.I. believes he may have killed dozens of people.

Two years ago, an F.B.I. agent visited the Judge in his chambers and said that the Bureau was trying to develop a psychological profile of Swango. The doctor was thought to have fled the country in early 1994, while he was being sought by police on Long Island. The agent told the Judge that the Bureau had connected Swango to a number of possible homicides, and that he might have killed dozens of people. (A spokesman for the F.B.I. in New York, James Margolin, refused comment on this and all aspects of this story.) Swango is now in custody in Brooklyn, after being arrested last summer at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, but he is being held on a relatively minor fraud charge.

Judge Cashman was astonished by the number of Swango's alleged victims—which, if proved, could make him one of the most prolific serial killers in American history. He was equally disturbed, however, by the number of hospital administrators and doctors who had entrusted the care of patients to a man whom they knew to be a convicted felon, and he noted that the medical profession seemed blind to the possibility that one of its own could be a serial murderer. "It's outrageous that he has been allowed to go on," Judge Cashman said. "It's a national scandal."

MICHAEL SWANGO was born at Fort Lewis, Washington, in 1954. His mother, Muriel, was a housewife, and his father, John, was a military officer. The family settled in Quincy in 1967, after years of moving from one military base to another. John Swango was in Vietnam during Michael's adolescence; his family believed that he was engaged in clandestine operations both in the Army and, later, while working for the Agency for International Development. After the fall of Saigon, in 1975, he became estranged from his family and began to drink heavily, and died in 1982. Nevertheless, Michael appears to have glorified his father's Vietnam exploits.

Muriel Swango has said that her son got along with other students and was well adjusted. At Quincy's Notre Dame High School, Michael was a class officer

COURTESY QUINCY COLLEGE; OPPOSITE: MIKE ROEMER/SIOUX FALLS ARGUS LEADER

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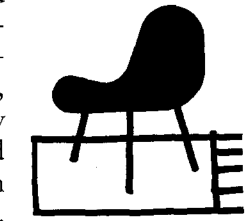
When police searched Swango's apartment, they found "an entire mini-lab" of poisonous compounds.

and served on the student council, the school paper, and the yearbook staff. He ranked in the ninety-seventh percentile on his college aptitude tests, and his high-school clarinet teacher described him as a brilliant musician—one of his most promising students. On graduating from high school, he received a scholarship in music to Millikin University, a private college in Decatur, Illinois. He left Millikin after two years to join the Marines, spent two apparently uneventful years there, and received an honorable discharge with the rank of sergeant. After he returned home, he enrolled in a community college, and later transferred to Quincy University, from which he graduated, in 1979, with a near-perfect 3.89 grade-point average. By then, he had given up the clarinet, changed his major to chemistry and biology, and wanted to become a medical doctor.



It was when Swango enrolled at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, in Carbondale, at the age of twenty-four, that he began to have real problems. His classmates remember him as a "gunner"—someone who would do anything to get ahead—but otherwise found him withdrawn, a loner. They suspected him of cheating, and his work seemed sloppy and cavalier, perhaps because he was often away, working part time as a paramedic. A few years later, a fellow-student noted that Swango had struck him as being "immoral to the point of being psychopathic." Swango had been given the nickname Double-O Swango, this student said, "because of the number of times that his reports indicated that a patient was doing well, and the patient would soon thereafter die or have severe problems." After Swango failed a required course in obstetrics and gynecology in his third year, a student-faculty committee convened to review his status. One resident complained that Swango had prepared a report on a patient without ever examining that patient. Swango denied it, but when a faculty member obtained the patient's chart there was no entry, as there should have been, to suggest Swango had ever seen the patient. Citing this and a series of other incidents, the doctor urged that Swango be dismissed, although he was only a month away from graduation. Eight members of the committee moved for his dismissal; one abstained; and only one, John Murphy, a pathologist who was one of Swango's teachers, voted to give him another chance. "I saved him from dismissal," Dr. Murphy told me recently. "I was raised in a large family, I believed in fair play."

The committee decided that Swango should spend an additional nine months in the program and would have to repeat the OB/GYN course. The following spring, he graduated, earning all "satisfactory" evaluations. (The school doesn't award letter grades.)

Dr. Murphy told me that he now feels he misjudged Dr. Swango. "To be honest, I feel very bad I was one of his defenders. I was wrong about him. . . . I was duped."

There was no indication of any of this on Swango's medical-school records, and he applied for, and was admitted to, a prestigious residency in neurosurgery at the Ohio State University hospitals, in Columbus, beginning in July of 1983. It was a five-year appointment, but it was conditioned on satisfactory completion of his first-year interneship in general surgery. In the early spring of 1984, Swango received a letter from Ohio State notifying him that his appointment was being terminated at the end of his first year. The letter gave no reason for the termination. On being asked to leave, Swango decided to return that summer to Quincy, where he knew he could find temporary work as a paramedic at the Adams County Ambulance Service before applying for a license to practice medicine in Illinois.

MOST of the paramedics in Adams County had worked with Swango before, while he was in college and in medical school. "Wait till you meet Swango," they told a co-worker named Mark Krzystofczyk, who hadn't yet worked with him. Krzystofczyk thought it odd that a medical doctor, a former interne at a big university hospital, would choose to work on an ambulance crew as a paramedic, but when Swango arrived Krzystofczyk was struck by what he calls Swango's Beaver Cleaver looks and manner—an ability to charm patients and emergency-room doctors, and an eagerness to work long hours on the ambulance corps, often showing up to help at the scene of accidents even when he was off duty.

The ambulance paramedics worked twenty-four-hour shifts from quarters attached to Quincy's Blessing Hospital, frequently eating and sleeping on the premises. In the early morning on September 14th, Swango showed up with a box of doughnuts and put them on a table. "I got you guys a bunch of doughnuts," he said. Krzystofczyk took one, and so did three other paramedics. About half an hour later, one of them began to feel nauseated and, flushed and dizzy, had to rush to the bathroom to vomit. Fifteen minutes later, the three others were ill with similar symptoms.

"What did you do, Mike—poison us?" Brent Unmisig, one of the paramedics, asked Swango jokingly.

Swango sat forward in his chair and shook his head. "No, I didn't. You know I wouldn't do anything like that." He picked up the box that contained the remaining doughnuts, and left the room. The four men were so violently ill that they had to leave work.

The next day, a Friday, Swango was assigned to work at a high-school football game, where an ambulance was always on duty to deal with possible injuries on the field. His partner that evening was Unmisig. The game proceeded uneventfully, and just before halftime Swango offered to get Unmisig a soda. He returned with a cola in a paper cup and gave it to Unmisig, who drank part of it. By the end of the third quarter, Unmisig was vomiting behind the ambulance. Swango seemed concerned, and questioned him in detail about how he was feeling. Unmisig went home, where he continued to be violently ill with vomiting and severe headaches. He stayed in bed for three days.

Early in the afternoon on September 27th, Swango mentioned to his co-workers on duty that he was going for sodas, and one of them, Greg Myers, said he'd like a Diet 7UP. A few minutes later, Myers saw Swango come down the corridor with four sodas, then turn into the men's bathroom. When Myers took his 7UP, he noticed that it had already been opened. "Did you go in the bathroom and whiz in mine?" he asked, joking. He drank about a fourth of the drink, over ice, and was soon overcome by nausea and racked by what he said afterward was "the worst vomiting I've ever experienced." He went home to recover. A few days later, he got a call from Swango, who wanted to know every detail of his symptoms. Swango's interest seemed so acute that when he hung up Myers began to have suspicions about him.

One afternoon a few weeks later, two other paramedics noticed that some iced tea they'd brewed had become inexplicably sweet. Neither had added any sugar. Alarmed by the recent spate of illnesses, they dumped their glasses and began searching for some empty sugar packets. They found none. Meanwhile, Swango poured the entire pitcher of tea into a sink. Later that afternoon, after Swango had left on an ambulance run, they noticed that his duffelbag was open and that a bag stamped "George Keller & Sons" had fallen out of it. Keller is a large lawn-and-garden store in Quincy, and when the paramedics looked in the Keller bag they saw two containers of Terro Ant Killer. The primary active ingredient in Terro Ant Killer at that time was sodium arsenate, an arsenic derivative, concentrated in a sugar solution. One of the containers was empty.

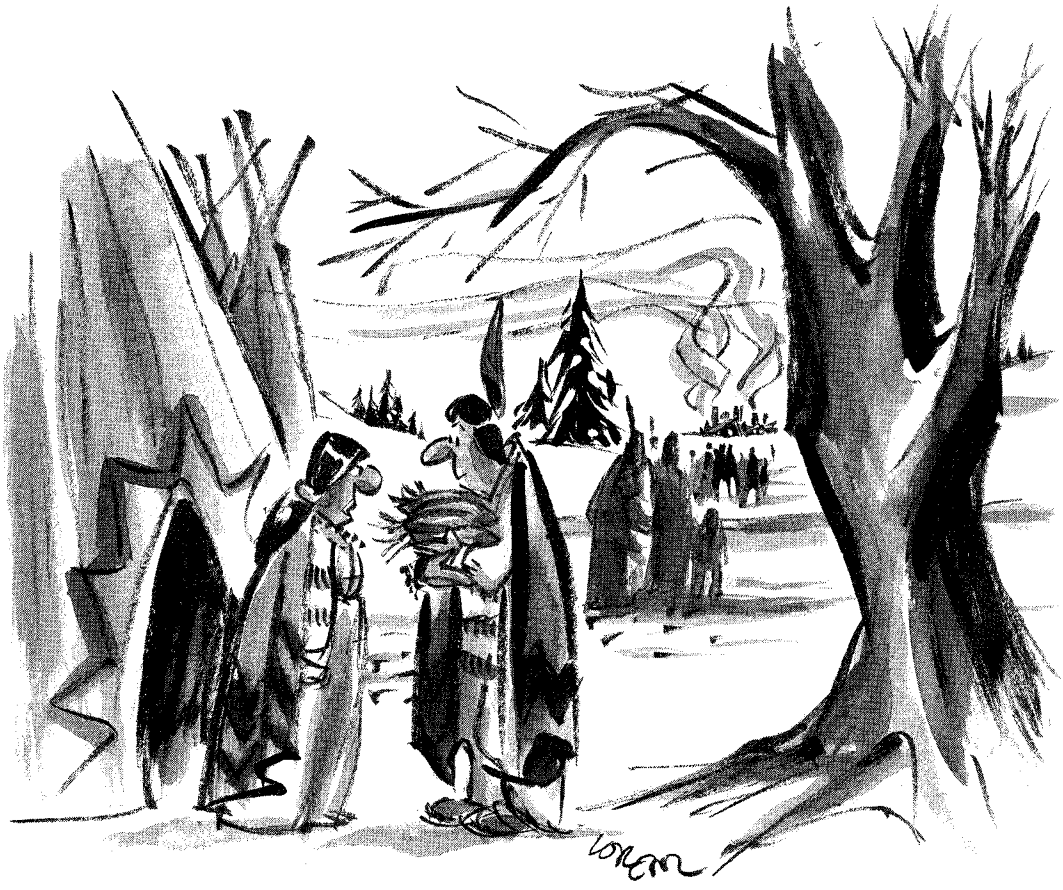
The paramedics began to recall some odd behavior of Swango's and some odd remarks he'd made. Earlier that summer, they had been watching TV in their quarters when they heard the news, accompanied by graphic footage, that a gunman had stormed a McDonald's restaurant in California, killing twenty-one people. Swango had leaped from his chair and turned up the volume, exclaiming, "That's just great! I love it! I wish I could have been there to see it all." Swango later added, "Every time I think of a good idea, somebody beats me to it." Krzystofczyk, who was often Swango's partner, recalls that Swango maintained a series of large scrapbooks, in which he pasted articles from newspapers and magazines detailing incidents of violent death, including numerous accounts of poisonings. "He told me it was a good way to kill people," Krzystofczyk recounted in a recent interview. Ambulance-attendant banter is "pretty rough-and-tumble," he said, and he never really knew if he should take Swango seriously. "The more I got to know him," Krzystofczyk continued, "the more he would verbalize about sordid things." One day, while they were drinking coffee at the hospital, the paramedics watched a public-TV broadcast about a notorious serial killer named Henry Lee Lucas. "Wouldn't that be great?" Swango asked. "To travel around the country killing people? Just moving on, killing some more—a great life style!"

Krzystofczyk and others also recalled that Swango liked to say that "the best thing about being a doctor would be to come out of the emergency room with a hard-on to tell some parents that their kid had just died from head trauma." He also talked about a sexual "fantasy" of burying a hatchet in the back of a female co-worker's head in order to induce seizures.

A week after the paramedics found the ant poison, Myers brewed a pot of iced tea, adding no sweetener. He and another paramedic left on an ambulance call. When they returned, Swango was no longer there; another paramedic said he had seen Swango racing his car away from the hospital. The paramedics delivered a sample of the tea to William Gasser, who had been a chemistry professor of Swango's at Quincy University and was a laboratory consultant at Blessing Hospital. A test revealed the presence in the sample of a heavy metal—a finding consistent with the presence of arsenic.

On October 26th, Swango got a call at work asking him to stop by the Adams County Sheriff's Office to supply some information; Swango had applied to become a deputy coroner and, the sheriff implied, he was about to get the job. Instead, when he arrived he was arrested and read his rights, and he gave permission for police to search his apartment.

When the police entered the apartment, they found a book with a skull and crossbones on the cover lying on a table in the midst of vials, needles, and bottles. The book, which is said to be



"We gave them corn last year."

popular with paramilitary enthusiasts, is a manual on "do-it-yourself mayhem," as its publisher puts it, telling the reader "how to buy most of the needed chemicals from your grocery and garden store." The police report stated, "An entire minilab set-up was observed. Detectives found numerous chemicals, suspected poisons and poisonous compounds." The police seized as possible evidence the book, various pest poisons (among them numerous containers of Terro Ant Killer filled to different levels), chemicals, syringes, a gallon jug of sulfuric acid, and a supply of castor beans, the raw material for ricin poison. (Swango had collected articles on the notorious 1978 assassination in London of a Bulgarian political dissident, who, it is conjectured, died after being pricked with a ricin-tipped umbrella.) They also confiscated a small arsenal of weapons, including a Mossberg twelve-gauge pump shotgun with a combat stock and a Llama .357-magnum revolver. When investigators went to the local library, they found that Swango had recently checked out a nonfiction book about a doctor who murders his wife and a novel about the poisoning of a city's food supply.

THE trial, on seven counts of aggravated battery, a felony, began on April 22, 1985, in the Adams County Courthouse. Swango waived his right to a jury trial; the verdict would be decided by Judge Cashman. The prosecution's case was straightforward, if highly circumstantial. No one, after all, had actually witnessed Swango administering poison to anyone. There was no apparent motive; on the contrary, Swango declared the paramedics to be his friends.

The paramedics described the events that had preceded their sudden illnesses and their symptoms. Forensic scientists from the Illinois State Police Crime Laboratory testified that additional lab reports showed the presence of arsenic in both the tea sample collected in the hospital and in hair samples taken from a paramedic who had eaten a doughnut and had drunk a tainted soda. A clerk at the Keller store identified Swango as the man who, wearing a paramedic's uniform, had bought six bottles of Terro Ant Killer.

As the trial proceeded, Judge Cashman was struck by Swango's neat appearance—he wore a suit and tie every day—and calm demeanor. He was deferential to the Judge and polite to others in the courtroom, including his mother and a girlfriend, Rita Dumas, who attended the trial each day. Swango emphatically denied poisoning anyone. He took copious notes and conferred often with his lawyer, a former public defender named Dan Cook, who had once been his high-school teacher. The cornerstone of his argument appeared to be that he had bought the numerous bottles of Terro Ant Killer to combat ant infestations he had encountered at previous apartments, in Columbus, Ohio, and Springfield, Illinois, and at his current apartment in Quincy. Indeed, at one point after his arrest, when he'd returned from visiting a brother in Florida, there were so many ants in his apartment that he'd called Cook, his lawyer, to witness them. Cook told Swango that his lawyer couldn't be a witness, and suggested that he call an exterminator. He did so, but at the trial the exterminator testified that the ants he had encountered in Swango's apartment were a type of ant common in Florida and the rest of the South but rare in Quincy's harsh winter climate, and never found indoors.

At the conclusion of the trial, Judge Cashman pronounced Swango guilty on six of the seven counts, acquitting him only of poisoning Krzystofczyk, whose symptoms after eating the doughnut, he said, appeared inconclusive.

Swango's testimony seemed "contrived and fabricated," the Judge told me when I visited him. As part of the compelling evidence he cited the disclosure about the out-of-place ants; the fact that a bottle of diluted ant poison in Swango's apartment matched exactly the level of arsenic found in the iced tea; that Swango tended to be present when the poisonings occurred; that he had poison in his duffelbag at the hospital; and that he showed a morbid interest in the symptoms of his victims. "I don't think he intended to kill them," Cashman said. "I think he wanted to take them to the edge of death. They were like a lab experiment."

Judge Cashman convened a sentencing hearing on August 23, 1985. Swango was his own principal character witness, delivering a lengthy, often eloquent plea that he be given a sentence of probation, so that he could use his medical skills to help others. "What can I do, Judge Cashman," he said, "and how could I work with you and the court to convince and show you that I still have a great wealth of good and caring to return to

JOSEPH FARRIS

"I'm tired of this full-time job. I want a part-time job."

this society and that I should be allowed with your trust and the People's trust to resume that service to society?"

Judge Cashman was clearly baffled by the nature of the crime and the seemingly earnest, well-intentioned young doctor before him. "I quite frankly have come to like you as an individual, Dr. Swango," he said, "and it makes it even more difficult to understand why you would do these things." Cashman nevertheless sentenced the defendant to five years in the state penitentiary—the maximum term for battery.

During the trial and sentencing, Dr. Swango drew on the medical profession for support. After the charges had been brought against him the previous fall, and while he was awaiting trial, Swango had applied in person for and obtained a position in northern Ohio as an emergency-room physician—in violation of the terms of his bail bond, which required him to remain in Illinois except for court-approved trips. He was hired by Robert Haller II, a regional vice-president of National Emergency Services, which recruited emergency-room doctors for several hospitals. During the sentencing hearing, Haller testified as a character witness for Swango, whose work at four different hospitals, he said, had received "above standard" evaluations. He said that he had dismissed him only when news of the trial "hit the papers," and testified that were it not for the bad publicity he would hire Swango again.

"Even though he has been convicted, you would rehire him?" a stunned prosecutor asked.

"Yes," Haller replied. "If it were up to me, I would." Questioned on the same point by Swango's lawyer, he said, "I personally would have no problems at all." He also said, "It's the public that comes to the hospital that would find it—you know, which would create a problem."

As a result of the Quincy revelations, Swango's earlier behavior in Ohio was being reëxamined. In October of 1984, the Quincy authorities had asked the Ohio State University Police for help in looking into Swango's background, and that investigation had taken on a life of its own. The following February, university police learned that Swango had a storage locker in Columbus, and they requested a Franklin County, Ohio, assistant prosecuting attorney named Edward Morgan to help prepare and execute a search warrant for the locker. The contents included M-16 firearms clips and two hundred rounds of blank machine-gun ammunition. While the police, at the university's request, tried to maintain a "discreet" and "low-profile" investigation, Morgan and his investigators became increasingly concerned by mounting evidence that Swango was linked to a series of deaths at the Ohio State hospitals.

Morgan's investigation, which he later summarized in a report to the Franklin County prosecuting attorney, established that Dr. Swango had been warned by Ohio State University officials in early January of 1984 that his performance was unsatisfactory and that unless it improved his appointment would not be renewed for a second year. Morgan suspected that this setback had triggered a violent reaction in Swango, for in the following days and weeks the hospital recorded a number of mysterious deaths and near-fatalities.

One of them occurred on the night of January 14th, when, witnesses recall, Dr. Swango went to draw blood from a young woman named Cynthia Ann McGee, who had recently been transferred to the hospital from out of state. She had been hit by a car while riding her bike at the University of Illinois, and although she had been unconscious, by the time of her transfer she "appeared to be aware of her environment, looked around, and said a few words," according to the report. At midnight, about half an hour after Dr. Swango left the room, a nurse discovered that McGee had "a pale, dusty, bluish look," and alerted a doctor and called a Code Blue—the highest emergency alert, requiring immediate response. Dr. Swango didn't respond, but other doctors did. McGee was pronounced dead, and a subsequent autopsy cited "cardiopulmonary arrest" that was due to incipient pneumonia. Janet Palisano, the nurse on duty, later expressed surprise at the autopsy report, since she had seen no signs of pneumonia.

Six days later, when a group of doctors was making rounds, at about 6 P.M., they came to check on several patients sharing a room. One of them, a twenty-

"Pompeii wasn't built in a day, either, but it was destroyed in one fell swoop."

one-year-old auto-accident victim named Richard DeLong, was in a coma but had recently been taken out of intensive care after his condition stabilized. He had been breathing oxygen through a tracheostomy tube and had then been resting comfortably when he was last checked by a respiratory therapist, about an hour earlier. Swango walked over to the bed. "I think your patient is dead," he called out to his fellow-doctors. DeLong didn't respond to efforts to revive him. As another doctor who was present put it later, "it was a surprise to us that he was in stable condition and one evening when we went on rounds . . . we walked into his room and he wasn't breathing."

Dr. Swango notified DeLong's family of his death, reaching his wife by phone. When the family arrived at the hospital, Dr. Swango, in the presence of another doctor, told them that DeLong had died from a heart attack. No autopsy was performed. (DeLong's wife says she requested one in writing, but the coroner's office says it has no record of her request.) Not until almost a year and a half later, as a result of Morgan's inquiry and after Swango had become notorious for the Quincy poisonings, was DeLong's body exhumed. The coroner found a wad of surgical gauze in DeLong's trachea. He changed the cause of death on the death certificate to homicide.

Two other deaths were later regarded as suspicious, but it was the case of Rena E. Cooper, a sixty-nine-year-old woman admitted to the hospital suffering low-back pain, that created the greatest concern at the time. On Tuesday, February 7th, just before 7 P.M., Mrs. Cooper, who shared a room with another patient, was served dinner and given some painkillers. A group of doctors, including Swango, arrived on their rounds between 8 and 9 P.M. A student nurse, Carolyn Barry, came into the room shortly after nine and saw Dr. Swango standing alone by Mrs. Cooper's bed, with his back turned. "It looked like he was putting something in her I.V.," she told investigators a year later. "I knew he was putting something in. You can just tell." She left but stood nearby, and two minutes later she heard bed rails rattling in the room and Mrs. Cooper's roommate screaming. When Barry entered, the roommate told her, "There's something wrong." Mrs. Cooper was turning blue and wasn't breathing. Barry immediately called for help, and other nurses and doctors came rushing into the room and called a Code Blue. Barry, the student nurse, told them she had just seen Dr. Swango injecting something into Mrs. Cooper's I.V., but, she said later, "they didn't believe me."

One of the attending doctors, Arlo Brakel, who was the head of the surgery residents at Ohio State, later described Mrs. Cooper's condition: "At the time we saw her, she was not breathing. She was unconscious. She had no movements to any stimulus, even deep pain. . . . I mean she didn't even, as I recall, even have any reflexes"—a condition, he said, that was consistent with "a paralyzing drug."

Meanwhile, a nurse's aide saw Dr. Swango emerge from a room four doors away and around the corner from the commotion in Mrs. Cooper's room. "He had a goofy look on his face," the aide later said. "Like a kid with his fingers in the cookie jar." It was, the aide said, "basically a shit-eating grin." The aide continued into the room that Dr. Swango had come out of and found a large syringe, its plunger fully depressed, lying on the sink. The aide summoned a nurse and pointed out the syringe. "She picked it up with a paper towel, wrapped it in a paper towel, and put it underneath the sink there . . . and she looked at me and she said, 'O.K., I'm putting this right here. You're my witness.'" The nurse subsequently put the wrapped syringe in an attaché case and gave it to the head nurse on that floor, and the head nurse discussed it with the attending neurosurgeon for Mrs. Cooper, Joseph Goodman.

Back in Mrs. Cooper's room, the medical team revived the patient by administering oxygen, but Mrs. Cooper couldn't speak, because a breathing tube had been inserted down her throat. Through gestures, though, she indicated she had something to say. A nurse gave her pencil and paper. The nurse remembers that she wrote, "Someone came in and put something in my I.V." The nurse then turned to the roommate, who was agitated. "A doctor with blond hair did something to Mrs. Cooper," the roommate said. Mrs. Cooper herself later recalled that she was unsure whether the person was a man or a woman; she knew only that the person was blond and looked to her like a "white angel of death." Almost immediately, she felt a "blackness" in her left hand where the I.V. was inserted, and the feeling spread up her left arm and then to the right side of her body. She became frightened when she discovered she couldn't speak, and began to shake her bed rail to make noise and attract attention. Then she lost consciousness.

Edward Morgan, in the course of his investigation a year and a half later, learned that during the week after Mrs. Cooper's mysterious respiratory arrest the Ohio State University hospitals held three meetings to review Dr. Swango's performance and the Cooper case. The ad-hoc inquiry group included several administrators and doctors, the hospitals' lawyer, and an assistant Ohio attorney general assigned to the university, but only one nurse—Jan Dickson, a supervisory nurse, who had demanded the review. One of the physicians, Michael Whitcomb, the hospital's medical director, was assigned the task of reviewing the information, and told the group that he believed that Mrs. Cooper, far from being injected with an anesthetic or poison, had suffered a grand-mal seizure and had been paralyzed immediately afterward. However, a later internal report by the hospital revealed that had the group spoken with a trained anesthesiologist or toxicologist its members would have learned that Mrs. Cooper's

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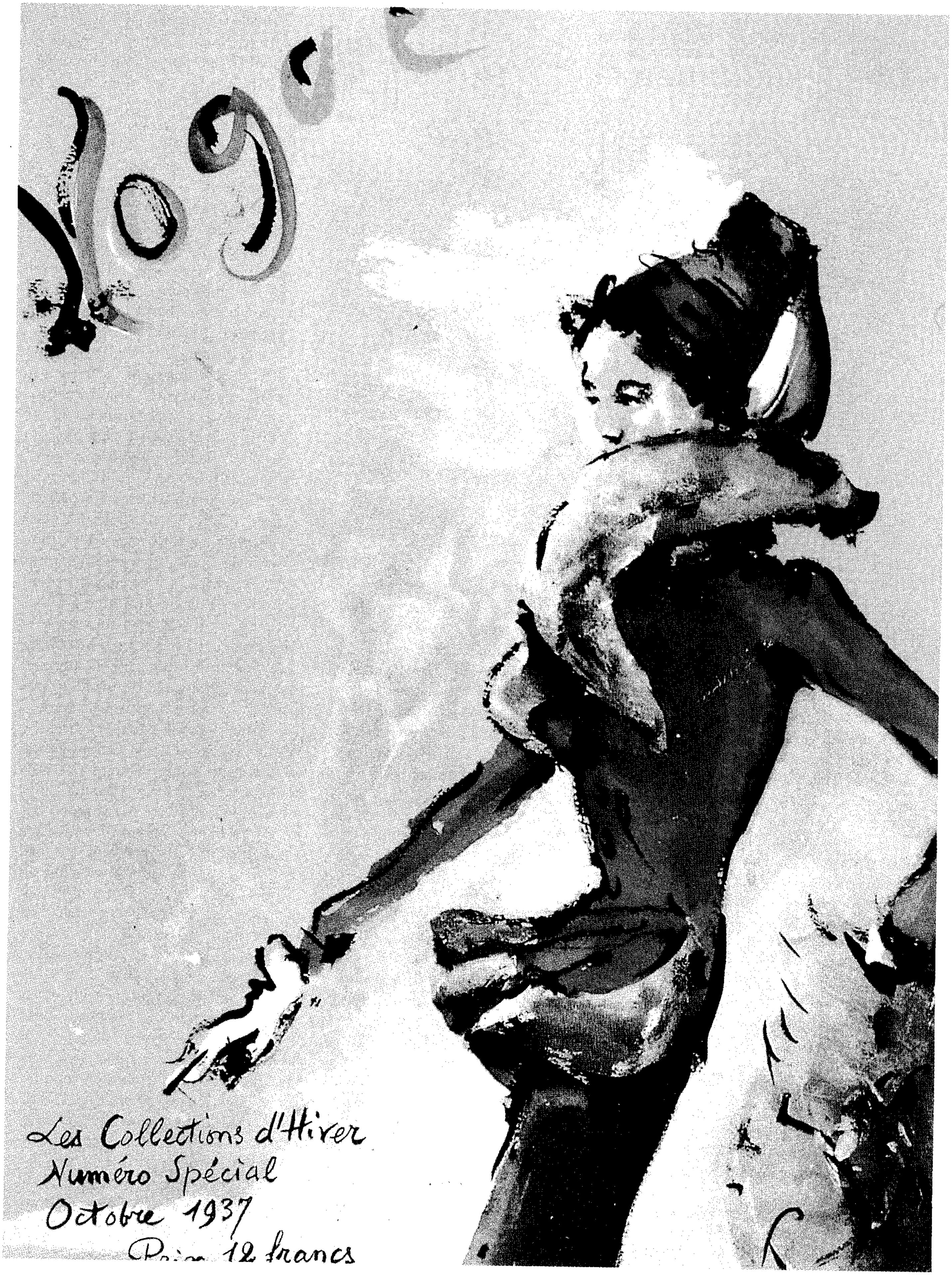
PREMIÈRE PLACE

For the past several centuries, the Place Vendôme—the emerald-cut Parisian square a few blocks north of the Tuileries—has boasted one of the world's highest concentrations of fashion plates and financiers. Next month, Rizzoli publishes "Paris Deluxe," a sumptuous record of its wealthy residents (from the Duc de Vendôme to the Sultan of Brunei), its grand hotel (the Ritz), and its couturiers, from Mme. Gringoire (corsetière to Empress Eugénie) and Mme. Paquin to Chanel and Charvet. Elsa Schiaparelli took over No. 21 Place Vendôme from Mme. Paquin, whose signature fur trimmings can be seen on the 1937 cover of French Vogue at the right.



Vogue

Les Collections d'Hiver
Numéro Spécial
Octobre 1937
Prix 12 francs

"It's just the architect's model, but I'm very excited."

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symptoms were consistent with the injection of either curare or anectine into her I.V. Both are common hospital anesthetics and can be dangerous if used singly; to prevent such reactions, anectine is customarily administered in conjunction with curare.

Swango was asked by three doctors if he had injected anything into Mrs. Cooper's I.V. He said no, but offered a different explanation to each of them. To one he said that he was never in Mrs. Cooper's room; to another he said that he entered her room at either her or her roommate's request to retrieve some slippers; and to the third he said that he had entered the room to draw blood. He was never asked about these inconsistencies. Nor did anyone ask about the empty syringe that the nurses had preserved after Mrs. Cooper's respiratory failure. About six months later, the head nurse threw the syringe away. "No one ever collected it from me," she later told university-police investigators, "and I asked somebody, 'Do you think it's O.K.?' They said, 'Well, sure, it's gone now. It's over with.' So I threw it away."

Morgan was nearly beside himself on learning about the loss of such crucial physical evidence. "It was incredibly frustrating," he told me recently. "If we had been contacted at the time, there was a lot of evidence that would have been available. Instead, the evidence had disappeared." He was astounded, he later noted in his report, that the members of the hospital group investigating Swango "failed to call the actual witnesses before them for statements," and "did not interview any of the nurses, [Mrs. Cooper], her roommate, or Dr. Swango." Morgan recently told me, "I can only arrive at one conclusion—they didn't want to know. They just wanted him out of the hospital."

Legal issues appear to have figured prominently in the group's discussions. Dr. Whitcomb later said, "What we did, we presented the information we had to the lawyer who was providing us advice. Based on the information that was available, it was his opinion that there were no grounds for us to take any action against Dr. Swango and that there was no other investigation that needed to be carried forward." But when the lawyer was asked by Morgan about that advice, he insisted that it was the doctors who, after hearing the report by Dr. Whitcomb, "indicated there would be no further in-house investigation or further inquiry." In any event, on February 14th the ad-hoc inquiry group concluded that Dr. Swango should be permitted to return to patient care immediately, but with greater supervision.

When Mrs. Cooper was released from the hospital, the discharge summary on her chart contained a suggestion that her suspicions about someone's tampering with her I.V. were a paranoid delusion: "The patient gave indication that she entertained some paranoid ideation regarding the cause of her respiratory arrest and felt that it may be due to unnamed person or persons."

Dr. Swango's return to his post after the conclusion of the investigation coincided with two other suspicious but less well-documented incidents. That February, Dr. Swango accompanied the attending surgeon, Gary Birken, on a round to visit Evelyn Pereny, who was recovering from colon surgery. It is not clear whether Swango was ever alone with her. Forty-five minutes after their visit, Dr. Birken was called back to her bedside, and he found her bleeding profusely and inexplicably from many parts of her body, including the eyes and the nose. Birken later said that such symptoms occurred in patients who had been poisoned. Several days later, another patient, Charlotte Warner, collapsed while standing up to use a bedside commode and was pronounced dead forty-five minutes after she was found there. An autopsy was performed, and doctors at the time were puzzled by the discovery that she had died from blood clots appearing all through her body—a condition, as it happens, that is consistent with ricin poisoning.

Then, in June, while completing his surgery rotation in pediatrics at Children's Hospital, Dr. Swango offered to get some "extra spicy" Kentucky Fried Chicken for a group of doctors who were on duty one evening. The three residents who ate the chicken soon became ill, with nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. One of them said afterward, "It's as sick as I've ever been." No one suspected foul play.

Ohio State did not renew Swango's appointment for the following year, notifying him of the fact in a letter that gave no reason for the decision, but Dr.

Larry Carey, the chairman of the department of surgery, recommended that Swango be licensed to practice medicine in the state of Ohio that March, albeit with "reservations." When the State Medical Board asked for details, Dr. Carey focussed on Swango's general performance as an interne. He mentioned the investigation but said that Swango had been "exonerated." Ohio State doctors subsequently recommended that he be licensed to practice medicine in Illinois. When Dr. Carey was later questioned at the behest of Quincy authorities about Dr. Swango's background, he again said only that Swango had been accused of tampering with a patient's I.V. but had been completely cleared of any wrongdoing.

Morgan and the police officials spent thirteen months investigating Swango. "We were in over our heads," Morgan told me. "Your usual prosecutor is comfortable with weapons, guns, beatings. But when it comes to poison we needed professional help. I can still picture myself in the office reading up on poisons and realizing that if this is what happened we were in big trouble. Back then, if the poison was ricin or derivatives, there was no known test for it."

The professional help that Morgan felt he needed was not forthcoming from the university hospitals. Morgan said that from a law-enforcement perspective the hospitals' internal investigation was shockingly inadequate, and noted in his report that doctors, administrators, and lawyers appeared to coördinate their responses to his investigation, closely monitoring its progress.

Morgan's boss, the Franklin County prosecutor, requested that he submit a draft of his report to the president of Ohio State University and afterward asked him to delete the names of the patients and all the doctors and hospital officials involved. The doctors and administrators at the university hospitals "greatly resent the intrusion of law enforcement in their affairs," Morgan told me. "From Day One, they resented us. They never really coöperated, or it was grudging coöperation, it was on the surface. I had to threaten them with investigatory subpoenas. . . . It's all done under the rubric of 'patient care.' They said, 'We can't have police running around the hospital. It would upset the patients.' They didn't trust us. . . . They were petrified of lawsuits."

Morgan reluctantly concluded that he could not prosecute Dr. Swango without at least some corroborating physical evidence, such as syringes, blood tests, or hair samples, but none of these had been retained by the hospitals. "The circumstantial evidence was not enough," Morgan said. His anger at the Ohio State doctors and administrators still audible in his voice, he told me, "They covered it up, that's what it was."

Robert Holder, a lawyer for Ohio State who participated in the Swango inquiry at the time, strongly denies that. "Naturally, our review was criticized by others after the fact," he said. But "you don't come to a meeting thinking someone is a complicated psychopathic killer." Emphasizing that no one knew then of any blemish on Swango's character, he said, "This complaint was taken very seriously and was considered by a distinguished group" that "did a more extensive review than my subsequent experience tells me that a lot of places would do." He added that "the concern of the group at the time was to be even-handed," and denied that potential liability was a factor. Still, he acknowledged that "we could have done better—there's no doubt about that. If we had some of the evidence that was later produced, this would have been an easy decision." He said that the university has since taken steps to improve relations between the police and the hospitals.

Swango himself refused to talk to the Ohio investigators from prison, nor would he consent to be interviewed by a psychiatrist. But in 1986 he did agree to be interviewed for ABC's newsmagazine program "20/20," which described the Quincy poisonings and mentioned the investigation in Ohio. Seemingly unruffled by the allegations, Swango denied any wrongdoing and maintained that he had been convicted in Quincy by tainted evidence. Meanwhile, Judge Cashman had heard about Morgan's investigation. "What happened at Ohio State is an absolute crime, apart from what Swango did," he told me recently. "If handled appropriately, he would never have ended up in Quincy."

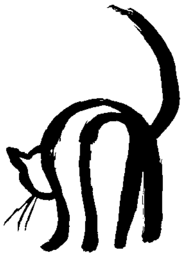
WITH credit for time served and for good behavior, Swango was released in two and a half years. While in prison, he had lost his license to practice medicine in both Ohio and Illinois, and there are gaps in his employment history over the next few years. Accompanied by his girlfriend, Rita Dumas, he moved to Hampton, Virginia, where he applied, unsuccessfully, for a license to practice medicine. Instead, he went to work as a counsellor for the Career Development Center, which helped students get into medical and other professional schools. He was fired in mid-1989, reportedly after three of his co-workers became violently sick. Police investigated, but no charges were filed. Swango then found work as a lab technician at Aticoal Services, which tested samples of coal to be exported to France from the United States. William C. Banks, the president of Aticoal at the time, told me that he found Swango to be an exemplary employee; he did not know that Swango had a medical degree or that he was moonlighting as a paramedic at a hospital nearby. He recalled meeting Rita Dumas and granting his employee's request for time off to get married. When I asked Banks if anyone had become mysteriously sick, he said, "Workers did become ill." Then he added, "I became ill one day while he was employed there. I had to go into the hospital. I felt very dizzy, nauseated, weak, and sweaty. I couldn't even stand up. My doctor thought it was due to a change in my medication." Another person "was far worse," Banks said. "He was taken to the hospital in a near-coma. We thought it was diabetes."

Swango legally changed his name to David Jackson Adams, and took courses to be certified as an emergency medical technician. But he included his given name on applications for medical residencies, since it had to match his medical-school degree. In May of 1991, the state's attorney's office in

Quincy received a letter about Swango from Dr. Jeffrey Shultz, chief of medicine at the Ohio Valley Medical Center, in Wheeling, West Virginia, which said, "We are considering offering him a position" and "we want to be fair with this young man." The letter continued, "Frankly, the severity of his punishment seems out of proportion to the offense committed, based on his description." According to a followup letter, Swango had said that his conviction, which was technically for battery, grew out of an "altercation in a restaurant" in which a friend was accosted and he intervened. Once Dr. Shultz received a response from Quincy authorities, negotiations with Dr. Swango ceased, and the West Virginia hospital forwarded to Quincy copies of documents Swango had given it. One of them was an altered version of Swango's prison-discharge fact sheet, which stated "releasee struck a blow with his fist," with no reference to poison. Another was a similarly altered appellate-court docketing form.

By late 1991, Swango's relationship with Rita Dumas had apparently failed—although it is unclear whether they ever did marry or, if they did, ever divorced. He met an attractive young nurse named Kristin Kinney in a class on advanced cardiac life support. The couple became engaged in late spring of 1992. Kristin's mother, Sharon Cooper, recalls, "We all found him personable. I was quite happy for my daughter. He was good to her. There was nothing he wouldn't do."

The previous fall, Dr. Anthony Salem, the head of the residents' program at the University of South Dakota, in Sioux Falls, had received a letter from an applicant living in Virginia. The applicant seemed to have a solid academic record: he'd completed a distinguished interneship at Ohio State, and he'd devoted himself to emergency medicine as a paramedic. But he had not practiced as a doctor for some time and there was a gap in his résumé; he indicated that he'd been convicted of battery after an incident "unrelated to medicine." "I was interested," Salem told me recently. "This was sheer speculation, but I figured it had something to do with domestic violence. My feeling was there was no way we would hire this guy. Of course not. We don't need this sort of difficulty. But I wanted to know what had gone on."



A series of letters ensued. Dr. Salem sent Swango an application and, mystified by the still unexplained legal trouble, subsequently invited him for a personal interview. Like so many people who have met Swango, Dr. Salem was immediately taken with the earnest young man. Swango was also remarkably forthcoming about his past legal trouble, telling Dr. Salem that he had been charged with and convicted of poisoning his fellow-paramedics in Quincy. He even disclosed that in the past he had lied about his conviction, describing it as arising out of a barroom brawl, but had now concluded that it was better to be honest about it. He maintained that he was innocent of the charges, that he had been convicted on the basis of flawed evidence from a discredited crime lab, and that he had expected to be exonerated on appeal but the appeals court had looked only at procedural issues, and that the whole thing had been a gross miscarriage of justice. "He was very convincing," Dr. Salem said. "I wasn't experienced in dealing with people with this sort of record. I didn't even think about calling the prosecuting attorney, or the parole officer, or getting the records. I thought he had got a bad deal."

Still, Salem would not admit medical students who couldn't be qualified to practice in the state, and he assumed that a felony conviction was such a disqualification. But Swango explained that South Dakota was one of a "handful" of states in which, if a doctor showed that he'd "turned his life around," he could be licensed to practice medicine.

Dr. Salem, who is also in charge of accrediting physicians hired at the local veterans' hospital, the major teaching hospital for the university, told me that Swango was subjected to a lengthy hiring process. He was interviewed by other doctors in the internal-medicine department, and they found him acceptable. Salem obtained Swango's medical-school records, and they proved to be positive except for the problem with the OB/GYN course. He then called the State Medical Board of Ohio, and it reported that Swango's license had been suspended. Salem was not surprised, since Swango had already told him that his licenses had been suspended in Ohio and Illinois as a result of his conviction. The Federation of State Medical Boards told Dr. Salem that Dr. Swango had experienced "problems." Dr. Salem assumed that that, too, referred to the conviction.

Dr. Salem had his secretary write to Ohio State University to request verification of Swango's records, and in reply he received a letter saying that both Swango and the University of South Dakota would first have to sign a number of legal waivers. "I thought this was strange," Dr. Salem recalled. "But I didn't even know who our lawyers were. I didn't know whom to contact. We've never had to deal with lawyers." In any event, he thought he knew what Ohio State was talking about—the same "problems" that the medical boards had mentioned, which he'd already learned of from Swango himself. So Dr. Salem put the letter in Swango's file and forgot about it. Anyway, Michael Swango had begun his residency a few weeks earlier. "He did fine," Dr. Salem recalled. "He was very popular with the staff. He worked hard. He was ingratiating, nice, intelligent."

Swango was trying to burnish his credentials further by joining the American Medical Association, to which he applied in October of 1992. Because of his license revocations and his convictions, the application was referred to Nancy Watson, who worked with the A.M.A.'s council on ethical and judicial affairs, in Chicago. When she wrote to the courthouse in Quincy to obtain a copy of the conviction, Judge Cashman gave her a call. "Do you know who this guy is?" he began, and then proceeded to outline Swango's career. Taken aback, Watson wrote to Swango saying that the ethics council would have to examine his application further. Swango subsequently called to say that he was withdrawing it.

The day before Thanksgiving, Dr. Robert Talley, the dean of the University of South Dakota's medical school, mentioned to Dr. Salem that he'd just received a call from an acquaintance at the A.M.A. who had heard that Dr. Swango was a resident at the university hospitals. Dr. Swango, he said, had apparently had “problems.”

“I know,” Dr. Salem replied. “I’ve heard all about them in Illinois.”

“No,” Dr. Talley said. “This was an issue of deaths at Ohio State.”

Salem was startled. “I have absolutely no knowledge of anything like that,” he said.

Dr. Salem knew that he would personally be supervising Swango for the next three days. “He would not be doing anything unless I knew about it,” Dr. Salem recalled, so nothing was said to Swango about Ohio. Then, that Saturday evening, a cable-television program called “Justice Files” aired in South Dakota, and the program contained an excerpt from the “20/20” broadcast about Dr. Swango. Within five minutes, Dr. Salem got a call from an anxious hospital employee who had recognized Swango. Then a local doctor called. Fifteen minutes later, Dr. Salem told me, he was in his office frantically reviewing Swango’s personnel folder. At midnight, using the hospital E-mail, he suspended Swango from the residents’ program and revoked his pharmacy privileges. When he got home, in the early hours of the morning, he watched a rerun of the television program that had triggered the uproar. Dr. Salem thereupon realized that the conviction in Quincy of his fellow-physician had been no miscarriage of justice.

Dr. Salem called Dr. Swango at 9 A.M. on Sunday and told him that he wanted to see him in his office that afternoon. Swango, seemingly puzzled, arrived accompanied by Kristin Kinney, whom Dr. Salem knew from her work as an intensive-care nurse at the veterans’ hospital. (She had moved to Sioux Falls with Swango.) Dr. Salem played a tape of the segment on a VCR, and Swango acted shocked. “He said he didn’t understand what they were talking about—as though he had never seen this before,” Dr. Salem recalled. If he was ever under investigation at Ohio State, he said, he was unaware of it. Under the circumstances, Swango remained remarkably calm. “He was convincing in his demeanor,” Dr. Salem said. “But there it was on TV.”

Dr. Swango hired a lawyer and appealed his dismissal. “He called this Swango-gate,” Dr. Salem recalled. “He called the local newspapers himself, claiming he didn’t do anything.”

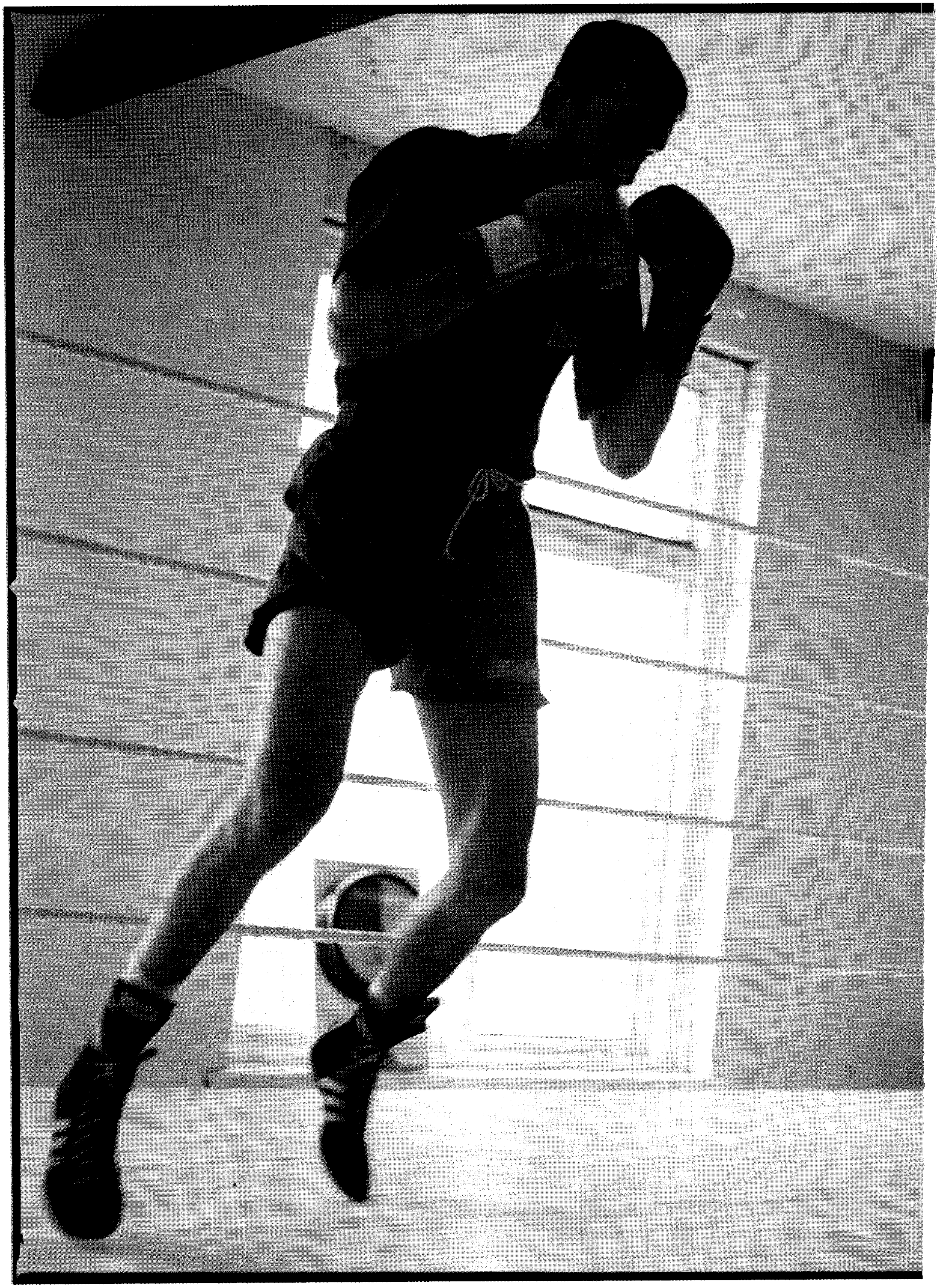
DURING the meeting with Swango and his fiancée, Dr. Salem was struck by Kristin Kinney’s reaction to the disclosures. “She had never seen this before, I’m quite certain,” he said, and he later heard that she had confided to friends that she had known nothing of the allegations in Quincy or at Ohio State. Nevertheless, Kristin stood behind her fiancé, and the two moved back to Portsmouth, Virginia. Her mother, Sharon Cooper, and her stepfather, Al Cooper, were puzzled by the sudden setback in what had seemed a promising future for Swango. “We were told that this news story had broken loose in South Dakota,” Sharon Cooper recalled. “We didn’t have a lot of detail, but we were told by Michael it was nothing to worry about. It was a media hoax. That was it.” Al Cooper recalled that when the news had broken in South Dakota his wife offered to go and get Kristin, but that Kristin “became angry at the suggestion.” He explained, “We were concerned about her, but we respected their privacy.” Kristin said that “she was going to stick with him,” her stepfather recalled. “She said she believed him.”

After the couple returned, the Coopers were more concerned about their daughter’s well-being than they were about whatever trouble Swango had experienced. Swango wasn’t working, so Kristin supported him and lent him money to pay his bills. She was twenty-six years old, and had always been a “lovely, friendly, loving person,” in Mrs. Cooper’s words, but when she returned “she was reclusive—she was different from when she’d left.” Mrs. Cooper was further worried because Kristin was suffering from vomiting and violent headaches. “I thought it was just stress,” Mrs. Cooper said. Then, on June 1, 1993, Swango was accepted for a residency in psychiatry at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and he moved to Long Island. Kristin stayed behind, and her mother noticed that she had stopped wearing her engagement ring.

On July 15th, Kristin’s body was found in a park in Newport News. She had died from a gunshot wound in the chest, apparently self-inflicted. A suicide note was found in her truck, which was nearby. “I’m finally at peace,” it read.

Two police officers called the Coopers that night and told them to come down to the station to identify their daughter’s body. The police asked whom Kristin had been seeing, what she had been doing with her life. When Mrs. Cooper told them she was engaged to Michael Swango, “they put their heads in their hands and moaned,” Mrs. Cooper told me. “They acted as if something was really wrong, but they

THE WORLD WILL END NOV. 27



didn't tell us anything." As a result, the Coopers went to the local library, where they discovered that before Swango met their daughter there had been a small article in the local paper that mentioned his conviction for poisoning.

Sometime later, as Mrs. Cooper was going through her daughter's possessions, she discovered a journal that Kristin had kept in South Dakota. Mrs. Cooper told me she remains haunted by one of the entries: "I was so sick, I was vomiting, I couldn't hold my head up, it hurt so bad." Mrs. Cooper now wonders whether her daughter committed suicide out of grief and shock upon suspecting that her fiancé was poisoning her.

On September 29, 1993, a sixty-year-old cabinetmaker named Barron Harris checked into a Long Island V.A. hospital in Northport, for what he expected would be a relatively brief course of treatment for pneumonia. Harris generally had been in good health, and he and his wife, Elsie, had recently celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. When Mrs. Harris came to the hospital to visit her husband, she found a doctor sitting attentively near his bed. He had a broad smile, which Mrs. Harris found immediately reassuring. He introduced himself as Dr. Michael Kirk.

Mrs. Harris was impressed by the time and attention that Dr. Kirk bestowed on her husband. Several days later, when she arrived to discover that her husband's hands were tied to rails around his bed, Dr. Kirk explained that Mr. Harris had suddenly become "agitated," so he had given the patient a sedative. Harris was now sleeping peacefully. Dr. Kirk told her that he had ordered several tests—something to do with the liver, Mrs. Harris recalls—and that it would be a few days before the results would be back. On a subsequent visit, Mrs. Harris arrived to find that the blinds in her husband's room had been lowered and closed. Dr. Kirk was alone with her husband and was injecting a syringe in his neck. "What's that?" she asked. "Vitamins," the doctor replied. He left, and when a nurse arrived Mrs. Harris mentioned that the doctor had given her husband a vitamin injection. "You must be mistaken," the nurse said. "Doctors don't give injections at all—that's the nurses' job."

BOXING DAY

Daniel Day-Lewis is a great chameleon. He was prim and pinched as a young twit in "A Room with a View," fearsome as a nearly paralyzed painter in "My Left Foot," magnificently primal as a frontiersman in "The Last of the Mohicans," furious as a jailed Irish tough in "In the Name of the Father." Now he has teamed up with his "Name of the Father" colleagues, the writer-director Jim Sheridan and his co-screenwriter, Terry George, on another Irish drama, "The Boxer," in which he plays a Belfast fighter and I.R.A. firebrand who returns home after thirteen years in prison to resume his career and rekindle an old romance. The lanky Day-Lewis has bulked up for the role, and he has been in training with the former featherweight champion Barry McGuigan. Recently, the photographer Brigitte Lacombe caught the actor sparring with his coach.

The following Monday, Mrs. Harris arrived at the hospital to find her husband unconscious and on a respirator. When she asked Dr. Kirk what had happened, he said, "I hope it's nothing I did."

"What are you talking about?" Mrs. Harris asked.

"He's in a coma, and I know he's not coming out of it," Dr. Kirk replied.

Mrs. Harris began to sob. Dr. Kirk, who argued that Harris had already suffered irreparable harm, suggested that she agree to designate her husband as D.N.R.—Do Not Resuscitate. Despite her anxiety and grief, Mrs. Harris was struck by what she perceived as a change in Dr. Kirk. His manner seemed cold, detached. His solicitous concern for her husband appeared to have evaporated.

On October 13th, two days after Barron Harris lapsed into a coma, Dr. Jordan Cohen, the dean of SUNY at Stony Brook's medical school and a nationally respected medical educator, received a call from Dr. Talley, in South Dakota. Talley had heard from one of Kristin Kinney's friends that Swango might be practicing medicine in New York. Talley briefed Cohen on Swango's dismissal from South Dakota, and Cohen said he would look into it. He'd never heard the name Swango, but when he checked the school's records he discovered that Swango, who had changed his name to Michael Kirk

"I'm leaving you and the kids to join the Promise Keepers."

• •

about a month after he arrived at Stony Brook, was indeed enrolled and was caring for patients at the V.A. hospital as part of his training. "I was shocked to discover this," Dr. Cohen told me in a recent interview. "I was, of course, concerned about patients."

Cohen immediately suspended Swango from patient care, but he wasn't dismissed at once, nor were any outside authorities alerted, pending an internal investigation by the school and the V.A. hospital. Cohen confronted Alan Miller, who was the psychiatry department's residency director and a former New York State mental-hygiene commissioner and had overseen Swango's admission to the program. Dr. Miller acknowledged that he had not thoroughly checked Swango's background—an omission that seemed particularly egregious to Cohen, because Swango had disclosed on his application that he had been convicted of a felony.

But Swango had proved singularly persuasive at his personal interview with Miller. Cohen said to me, "From what I've been told, he made a very positive impression in the interview. There would have been no way a skillful psychiatrist would detect any deviant behavior or lack of truthfulness. Any of us would be taken in, given how charming and bright and effective he was." After South Dakota, Swango appears to have reverted to his practice of describing his conviction for battery as resulting from an altercation in a bar, which, according to Cohen, is the story he told Dr. Miller. Cohen acknowledged that the gap in Swango's résumé should have been investigated. "People who are accustomed to looking at résumés know that when there are periods that aren't accounted for that's a red flag that must be followed up on. It would have revealed that there was something remiss."

Swango was fired from his residency on October 19th, the local police were notified, and so, eventually, was the F.B.I. Swango had been seen in several places around town that week, and a group of nurses held a going-away party for him. (He appears to have been dating one of them, despite Kristin Kinney's recent death.) When the police arrived at his residence in a V.A. dormitory, he was gone.

The next day, a nurse approached Mrs. Harris, whose husband was still in a coma. "Have you read the papers?" she asked. "I'd advise you to go home and read them." Mrs. Harris bought a copy of *Newsday*, which identified Dr. Kirk as Michael Swango, convicted poisoner. "We went back to the hospital," Mrs Harris recalled. "We couldn't get any answers. . . . I spoke to the head of the intensive-care unit. He tried to assure me that Swango had had nothing to do with this and that my husband didn't stand a chance. But they never offered any explanation of what had happened." Barron Harris remained in a coma until he died, a few weeks later.

Cohen told me that he and his staff reviewed the records of all the patients treated by Dr. Swango at the V.A. hospital—there were a hundred and forty-seven, among them Barron Harris. "There were some deaths, which is not unusual," he said. "Those were of particular concern, nonetheless. We looked carefully, scrutinized. There was no indication that there had been any unnatural events. That came as something of a relief." Harris's cause of death was listed as cardiopulmonary failure, secondary to encephalitis.

A week after Swango was fired, Cohen reluctantly accepted Dr. Miller's resignation. "I felt the deviation from standard procedures was so egregious that there had to be accountability for that," he told me. "Dr. Miller was experienced and highly respected, and was a trainer of young people. It was a very unfortunate circumstance, but he was responsible for the quality-control process, and I felt it was essential that there be public accountability."

Dr. Cohen faxed a letter explaining what had happened to the dean of every medical school in the country. None of the other hospitals or medical schools to which Swango had applied, including those in West Virginia and South Dakota, had taken action like this. Cohen did, he said, because if he hadn't he feared that the same thing would happen again. Many of the schools wrote back, requesting a photograph of Swango.

Cohen's fears were well grounded. Federal law requires every hospital to check with the National Practitioner Data Bank whenever a doctor seeks hospital privileges. The data bank, which has been in operation since 1990, tracks, in its words, "medical malpractice payments, adverse licensure actions, adverse clinical privileges actions, and adverse professional society membership actions." Criminal convictions are not reported, but some investigations by hospitals of serious misconduct are. (Next spring, a second data bank, which will track convictions, is scheduled to begin operation.) Even if the hospitals to which Swango applied checked with the data bank, it's unclear what they could have learned, since anything Swango may have done before 1990 would not have been reported. (The data bank declined my request to run Swango's name through the system, saying that that was against regulations.) A glaring weakness in the data-bank legislation appears to be the lack of any immediate penalty for failing to submit a prospective doctor's name. The sole incentive is that a hospital that fails to submit a query "is presumed to have knowledge of any information reported to the Data Bank"—a fact that might be used against the hospital in any ensuing litigation. In any event, the failure of the medical establishment to monitor Swango suggests the need for a further review of the data bank by Congress.

SWANGO eluded capture, and by 1994 he had managed to travel to Zimbabwe, where he obtained a post as a doctor at a rural hospital in Mberengwa. According to Zimbabwean officials, he was suspended after five patients under his care died in suspicious circumstances and several more became seriously ill. Officials said that the five who had died told nurses that they had received injections from "Dr. Mike," as he was known there. Their complaints had been dismissed as hallucinations.

After leaving Zimbabwe, in 1996, Swango appears to have practiced medicine in Zambia and Namibia. Last spring, a placement firm with branches in South Africa and Boston arranged a new posting for him at a hospital in Saudi Arabia. When Swango, who was still in Africa, tried to obtain a visa to be admitted to Saudi Arabia, he was told that it would have to be issued in the United States. Swango thereupon obtained a ticket in Zambia for flights from Johannesburg to Chicago and from there to Portland, Oregon, where he had arranged to pick up a Saudi Arabian visa before flying to Riyadh that same day. In June of this year, he arrived at O'Hare International Airport carrying a passport issued in his own name; it gave him away when customs officials ran a routine check on fugitives from federal charges. Swango was arrested on the relatively minor charge of making a fictitious statement in a matter under the jurisdiction of the United States government—lying to the V.A. hospital on Long Island.

In September, Swango was arraigned in federal district court on Long Island. He pleaded not guilty, and he remains in custody at the Metropolitan Detention Center. He has refused my requests for an interview. Meanwhile, the F.B.I. and the United States Attorney's office continue to search for evidence to elevate the current charges against him. (In particular, they are hoping that he kept a journal.) To the single charge of misrepresentation, they recently added five counts of gaining possession of controlled substances—hospital medications—by means of deception. Swango's trial is scheduled to begin on January 5th. The V.A. hospital on Long Island has reopened its investigation. Despite the earlier finding that no patient had been harmed by Swango, an investigator there now says, "We just don't know. Clearly, he was doing his thing."

Earlier this month, Barron Harris's widow and Kristin Kinney's mother spoke with each other on the phone, and wept. Investigators had collected from Kristin's parents samples of her handwriting, presumably to compare with that of the suicide note, and some hair samples to test for evidence of poisoning. The assistant United States Attorney in charge of the case, Cecilia Gardner, recently travelled to Zimbabwe to seek additional evidence about the charges there, and that case and others could be introduced at a sentencing hearing in order to ensure that Swango, if he is convicted of the current charges, receives the longest possible term. The maximum penalty for the crimes he is charged with is five years.

At times, Judge Cashman feels that it may be his life's mission to monitor Swango's career. "The F.B.I. thinks he might come after me," the Judge said, and he showed me a Christmas card with Swango's signature which he received wishing him and his family a "safe Christmas." Most of the Judge's anger is directed at the medical profession. Hospital administrators and doctors had been so concerned about liability that they had refused to acknowledge evidence of numerous wrongful deaths. In Cashman's view, they had thus become Swango's unlikely allies. Ohio State "did nothing," Cashman said. "He should have been prosecuted in Ohio. No one would coöperate. There is an unwritten rule in the medical profession: Inept doctors do not get reported. Just get them out of town."

Certainly, even the most cursory glance at the medical profession's treatment of Swango appears to support Cashman's assertion. Swango performed poorly at Southern Illinois University, and was the subject of an investigation at Ohio State. Each institution made it possible for him to procure a license to practice medicine in its state, and did not prevent him from being hired in South Dakota or in New York. He might well have been hired in West Virginia if Quincy prosecutors hadn't intervened. Repeatedly, doctors at respected hospitals and medical schools were willing to believe the word of a fellow-physician, even when they knew him to be a criminal. Given the intensely competitive world of medical-school admissions, one is left to wonder how a convicted felon could even be granted an interview, let alone obtain a position.

"Most doctors I know are fine, upstanding people," Judge Cashman said as we discussed this question. But, he added, some of them consider themselves to be members of an élite, and treat each other accordingly. In addition, decades of personal-liability and medical-malpractice litigation have led to a crisis in relations between lawyers and doctors. Many members of the medical profession, often with some justification, view lawyers—and, indeed, the entire legal system—with distrust, if not outright hostility. In such a climate, some physicians seem willing to take the word of almost any doctor rather than accept the rulings of the courts. ♦

A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE GOOD SOLDIER

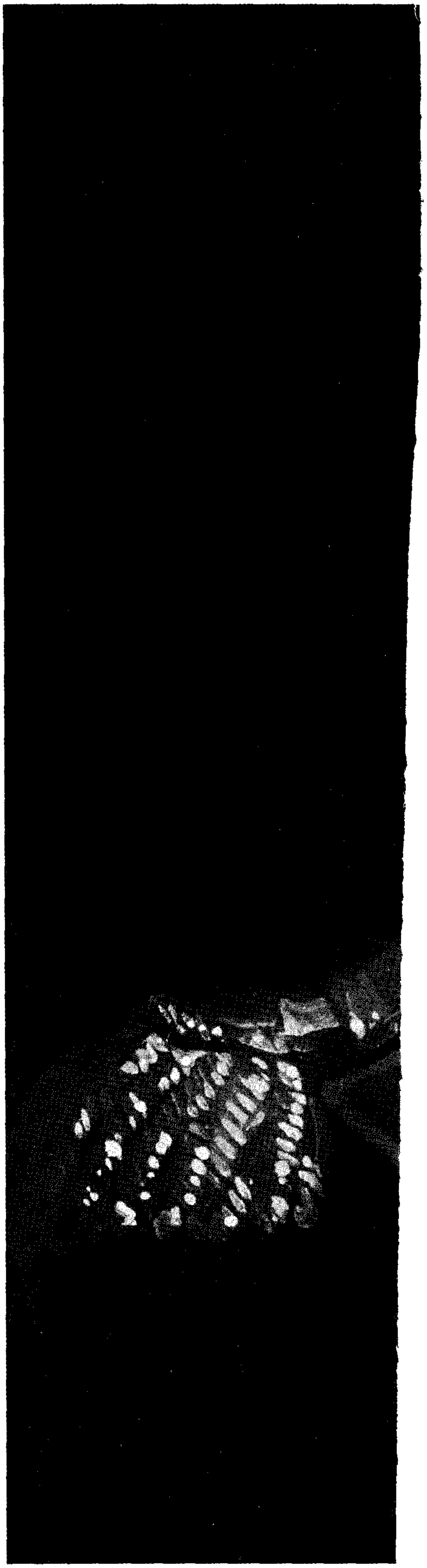
Almost two hundred years later, Napoleon still finds himself in the heat of battle.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

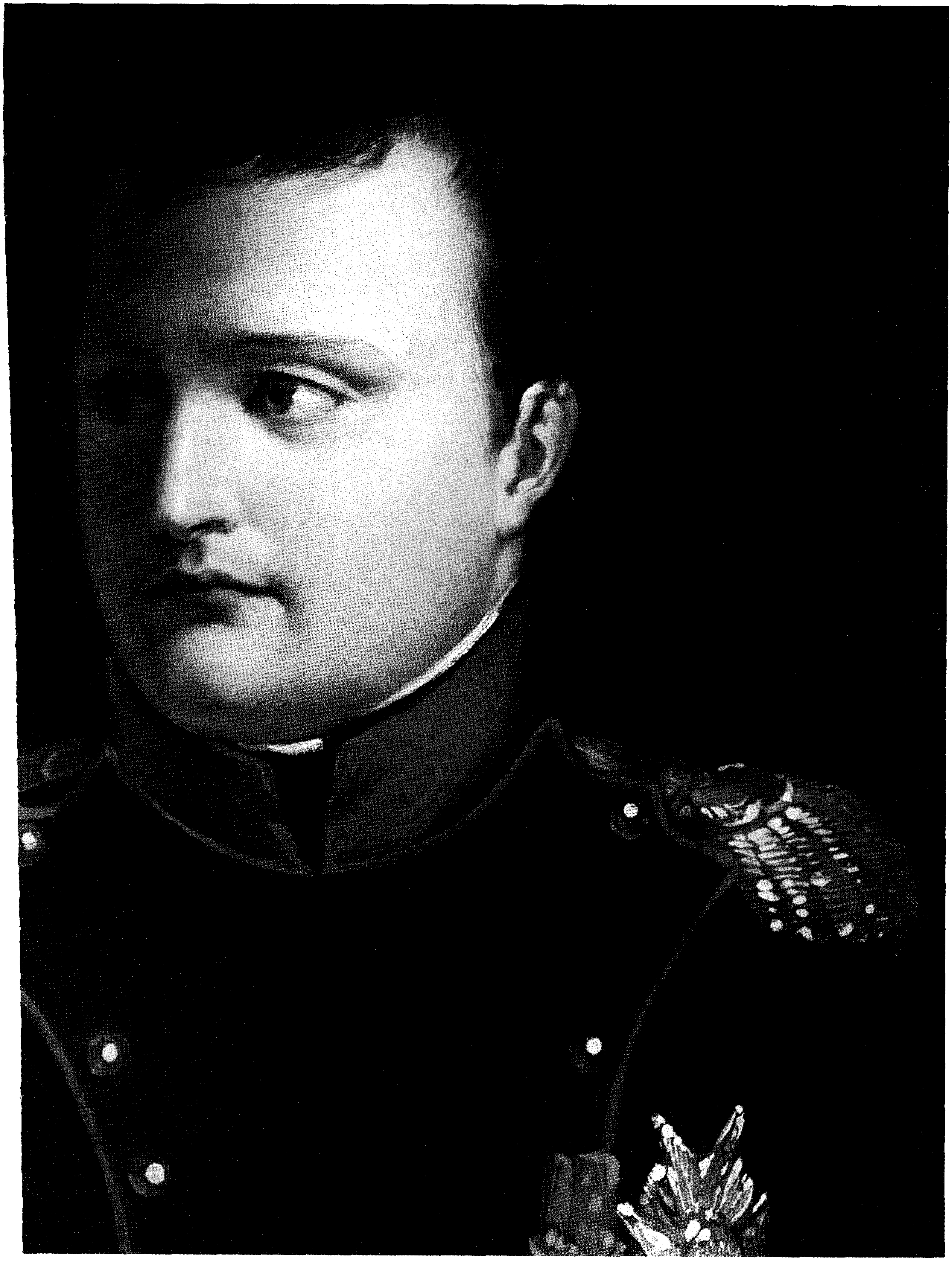
PEOPLE who are famous enough to be known by one name usually have one verdict attached to it. Though Churchill has his doubters and Mussolini his apologists, reputations are for the most part like summer rentals: an agreeably solid front, with the termites gnawing down below, unseen. Almost the only exception to this rule is the first of the great modern one-namers, Napoleon, Emperor of the French. In the case of no other historical figure does opinion diverge so widely, accept so extensive a set of possible judgments, or differ so radically from country to country. In France he remains a great man. Every year sees the publication of still more books, generally rapturous, about his life and times, to add to what is probably already the largest pile in the French language devoted to a single subject. (One guess puts the number at forty-five thousand.) A big success of French publishing this year has been a swoony series by a minor left-wing politician named Max Gallo, whose titles—"The Song of Departure," "The Emperor of Kings"—give the game away. "What character, what will, what courage, what energy, what imagination," the jacket blurb begins. The winner of this year's prize from the French Academy, Patrick Rambaud's "La Bataille," is a retelling of a Napoleonic battle. Last week, it also won the Prix Goncourt, the first time a book has ever won both prizes. For the French, Napoleon is not just an icon; he is a constellation, high in the sky, and no more to be judged good or evil than the stars are.

The darker view has been around for just as long, and, not surprisingly, gets its biggest play in England, where Napoleon has been pictured as a deformed megalomaniacal dwarf ever since Gillray's caricatures. In that vein comes Alan Schom's new book, "Napoleon Bonaparte" (HarperCollins; $40), which offers the most polished, scholarly, and successful version of Gillray's megalomaniacal dwarf that has yet appeared. Schom's book is obviously meant to replace Vincent Cronin's seventies biography as the standard one-volume work available to the general reader. But where Cronin took the worshipful French line Schom is a revisionist, even a negationist. Schom, whose earlier books include a precise, exciting history of the Battle of Trafalgar and a somewhat less exciting history of the Battle of Waterloo, can barely stand the sight of his subject. For Schom, nothing that Napoleon does is any good at all. He even goes after him with inverted commas: his victory at Austerlitz becomes "this 'successful' military campaign"; his impassioned love letters to his Polish sweetheart, Marie Walewska, become "impassioned 'love letters.'" His accomplishments as a maker of laws and of schools are described in a couple of pages and then dismissed in a paragraph, with Schom maintaining that the Napoleonic curriculum to this day is one in which "glory was extolled at the expense of truth, French leaders preferring to treat their citizens like children." Schom even concludes, in an afterword, that "all my medical friends confirm that Bonaparte—like so many dictatorial rulers—would according to the U.K. Mental Health Act of 1983 be described as a psychopath."

If Schom's Napoleon is credible, it's because of our knowledge of what came after Napoleon. In his own time, and for most of the nineteenth century, his career was irresistibly projected backward as a retelling of Alexander the Great's. In our time, it is hard not to project it forward as a first draft of Hitler's. There are enough similarities—the nationalism of the man not born to the nation; the failed invasion of England which turns into a disastrous invasion of Russia; the eventual defeat; the millions dead—so that Schom, without quite saying it, can ask the reader to see the events of 1812 through the lens of 1944. This is not an


Portrait of Napoleon by Jacques-Louis Davi

THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY



ehind his astonishing string of military victories, from Warsaw to Spain, was the radical democratization of the French Army.

unpersuasive reading: both Hitler and Napoleon did the same kind of compulsive, showy, exhausting talking; played the polymath with their retinues; wildly oscillated between cozy domestic longings and wild imprecations; and even feared their capital city. (Hitler mistrusted Berlin, and Napoleon never seemed at home in Paris.) Hitler's favorite French monuments, which he toured in a rush during his single, early-morning visit to defeated Paris, were the Imperial ones: the Arc de Triomphe and Napoleon's tomb.

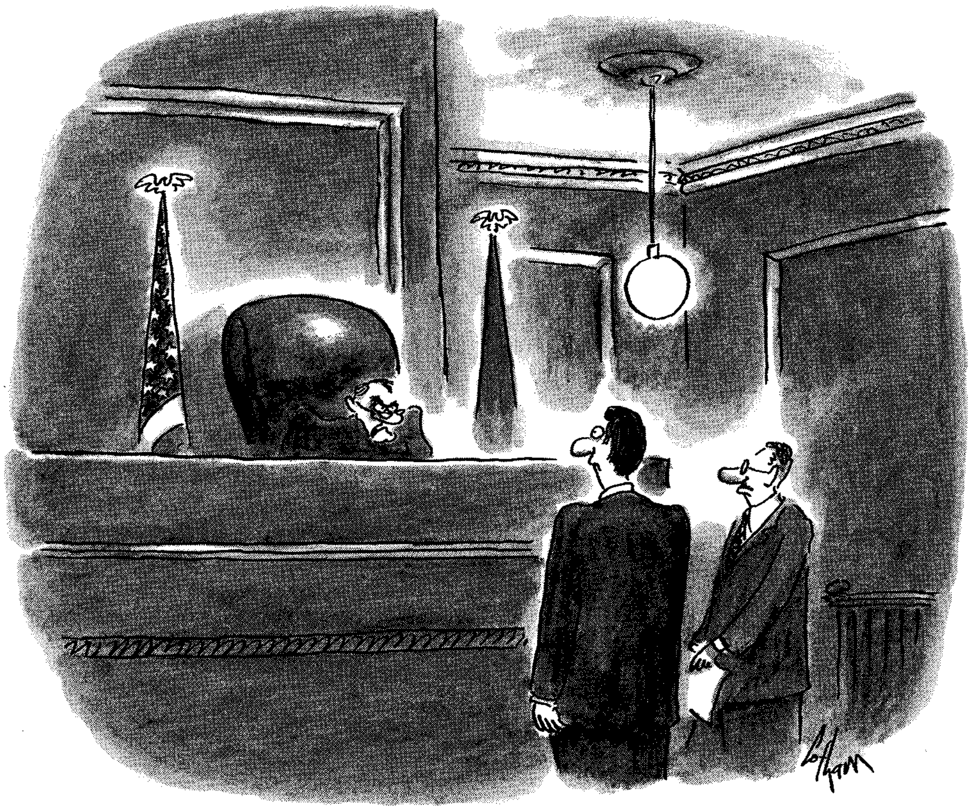
Yet to make Napoleon into a convincing villain we need at least to glance at why anyone, and especially generations of intelligent Frenchmen, from Stendhal to Victor Hugo, thought he was a hero. Historical contexts are infinitely expandable for the purpose of apology: the life of Al Capone misses the broader context of Chicago violence; the condemnation of Hitler misses the broader context of total war. (Brecht made an entire career out of this kind of argument.) But in Napoleon's case the context is specific enough to be manageable and significant enough to be meaningful: the disaster of the Revolution, and the crisis of the ideas of liberty and of order. The Napoleonic period is so complicated and the literature so vast and controversial that the amateur reader, trying to find a path, can only search and sort and simplify. Still, a couple of images force their way through. A true picture of Napoleon includes the idea of him as a charismatic dictator. But it also includes the rise of professions open to talent and the growth of the mass democratic army—in fact, of the modern state and all the manipulations necessary to make it run.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE was a foreigner in the country whose national ambitions he helped create. (In this, he was not only like Hitler the Austrian and Stalin the Georgian but also, and perhaps more to the point, like Alexander the Macedonian, who became the bearer of Greek culture.) He was born in Corsica in 1769, a time when the island was much closer, culturally and linguistically, to Italy than to France. Corsican nationalism, the movement in which Napoleon grew up, is the lost love child of the Enlightenment. After the sale of the island by Genoa to France, in 1767, the Corsican patriot General Pasquale Paoli led what was in many respects the first modern "liberation movement," to free Corsica. Corsica became the Tibet of 1770—the cool little country to be for.

His father, Carlo Maria Buonaparte, was a lawyer from a once grand Tuscan family; he was also a fierce Corsican patriot. As Paoli's movement grew, Carlo joined him in his battle against the French. The French kept sending in troops, though, and, after several losses, managed to beat the guerrillas. Carlo decided to accept a generous French offer of amnesty, and then took advantage of a scholarship program for impoverished aristocrats and sent his nine-year-old son, Nabulio, to the Royal Military School at Brienne. So Nabulio—or Napoleon, as his teachers renamed him on his arrival—was, unlike Hitler the Austrian, a nationalist whose nationalism was originally directed against the country where he was forced to make his way. The first records we have of him at school are of his being violently anti-French. (He spoke French with a strong Corsican accent, which he never lost.) He saw his mission in life as the liberation of Corsica from the French. "Civilize this dangerous islander" was the memorable order issued by one drill instructor to a friend of Napoleon's.

Napoleon got the virus of romantic nationalism very early, in its first Corsican appearance, before it became virulent—at a time when it was attached to the universalist Enlightenment love of liberty rather than to the pursuit of romantic identity, the mystical love of race and *Volk*. For Napoleon, the alternative to small-scale, island liberty was, paradoxically, large-scale French imperialism, practiced on the "If you can't beat 'em, lead 'em" principle. He had an outsider's freedom to be a little dangerous. Once, he and a friend went off to see a hot-air-balloon launch on the Champ de Mars. When the takeoff was delayed, Napoleon, who was fifteen, walked up, took out his penknife, and cut the balloon loose.

The Enlightenment side of Napoleon—the love of learning for its own sake, the appetite for strange civilizations and foreign shores—is the most attractive aspect of his character, and what sets him off most strongly from other world-devourers. Hitler was an autodidact, too, but there was an edge of delusion and grievance in his studies from the very beginning; Napoleon wanted to know. At his first military posting,



"Unfortunately, the law allows me no leeway in the case of an acquittal. I have to let you go."

I CANNOT SEPARATE HER

from the beautiful body.
She has charm and a very
gay spirit; in every way
she's attractive. Intelligent
and she reads good books.
But it's the faultless body
that forces me to make a fool
of myself, pursuing a virtuous
girl I could never possess.

—JAMES LAUGHLIN
(1914-1997)

with an artillery regiment in Valence, he was quartered in a little room above a café, where he read and, for his own satisfaction, wrote essays about Robert Walpole's politics, analyzed Plato's Republic, studied the ancient Persians, Carthaginians, and Assyrians, and the history of Turkey and the religion of the Aztecs. He wrote meditations on the State of Nature (mixed) and the Nature of Happiness (hard to figure). He liked big things, large numbers, long lists. He would copy out figures, making tiny augmentations for his own pleasure. He once read in a book that there were a hundred and thirty ships in the Spanish Armada, and in his notebook he made it a hundred and fifty.

All that studying only increased Napoleon's desire to bring freedom to Corsica, and eventually he obtained leave to go back to the island. But he found his family involved in various kinds of small-time crime, and, disillusioned, he returned to France and the Army after a year at home. Corsica as an abstract ideal didn't disappear from his thinking, but it did constrict, and in time it became pure clannishness. For him, much as for an Italian child of the Risorgimento emigrating to New York at the end of the last century, the nation became the family. Napoleon's Corleone-style devotion to his four hopeless brothers, all of whom he made kings and princes, turned out to be one of his greatest weaknesses.

NAPOLEON returned to France—landing, with his entire family, at Toulon in 1793—at the moment when the Revolution was about to become the Terror. France was headed by the first modern totalitarian agency to be ruled by a theory, the Committee of Public Safety. This proto-Khmer Rouge group—led by the original Pol Pot, Maximilien Robespierre—had taken as its motto Saint-Just's terrible statement: "The Republic consists in the extermination of everything that opposes it." Napoleon was troubled by the role of the Army in supporting the Terror (in 1793, after participating in General Carteaux's attack on Avignon, he wrote and published a long dialogue between himself and an imaginary businessman, debating which was worse, terror or civil war), and asked to be sent somewhere on the frontier, where he would not have to fight Frenchmen. As chance would have it, a Royalist uprising took place in Toulon, and was supported by an English naval garrison. Here was a reasonably unambiguous foreign invasion, and Napoleon, put in charge of the artillery, defeated the British, under Admiral Hood. His tactics were simple: with his cannon, he stood overlooking the city and fired until the British went away. His fellow-officers were impressed by his tenaciousness in finding the cannon. Like most gifts, Napoleon's military genius, on examination, owed a lot to grit and perseverance. Napoleon understood, to paraphrase Woody Allen, that eighty per cent of war-making is just getting other people to show up.

He was quickly called back to Paris. The Terror and its makers had been overthrown and replaced by a well-meaning but hopelessly ineffective series of constitutional governments. The guillotine was abolished, and its terrible site was soon given a new, more hopeful name: the Place de la Concorde. But the Royalists, sensing the constitutional government's weakness, planned an uprising, again with English help, and a mob marched on the Tuileries Palace. Napoleon, who was one of the few professional artillery officers around, and was on the side of the Revolution, fired on the crowd, killing two hundred, and saving the government. Within a few weeks, the constitutionalists, while they continued to bicker, offered Napoleon the command in a quixotic plan—to take northern Italy away from France's Austrian enemy. Before he left, Napoleon fell in love with a beautiful young widow named Rose Beauharnais, whose husband had gone to the guillotine. He liked everything about her except her name, and he peremptorily changed it to Josephine. They were married, but had an uneventful honeymoon. "We'll have time to make love when the war is won," he explained to her sapiently.

What Napoleon did to the Austrian armies in Italy turned him from a hero into a legend. Fighting with a relatively small force, and without enough food to feed his Army or enough money to pay for it, he defeated a succession of Austrian commanders and drove them from northern Italy. Although Schom gives Napoleon credit for what was, by any standard, a spectacular military victory, he doesn't try very hard to explain how Napoleon did it. The Italian campaign became the model for all of Napoleon's subsequent campaigns, and he stayed in command right up to Waterloo, so he must have been doing something right. But what was it? The American baseball analyst Bill James may have come close to capturing one secret when he wrote, half jokingly, that Napoleon invented relief pitching: the strategy of saving the best troops for the late innings. Certainly a mixture of extreme impatience and peasant shrewdness—throw almost everything you have at them at once, but keep back a crucial reserve—seems to have been key to his success. Other military historians have suggested other elements: organizational savvy, a taste for the offensive, an unwillingness to squander men in peripheral operations, a sense of when to strike, above all an appetite for the decisive battle.

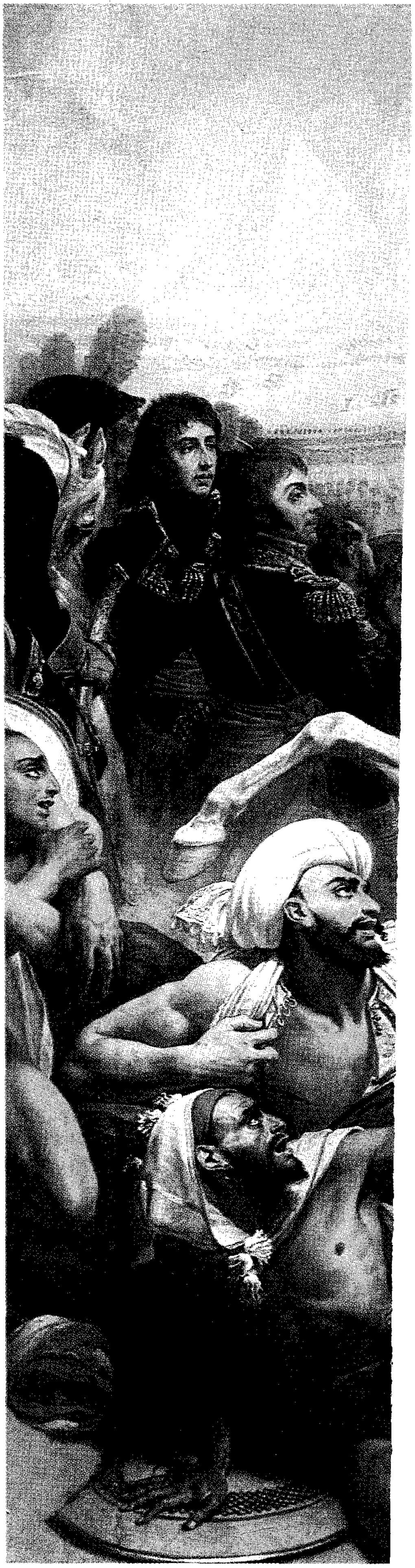
In the end, however, Napoleon's genius seems to have been cultural, in the military historian John Keegan's sense—derived from his skill at what might now be called "symbolic manipulation"—rather than strictly strategic. An amateur reader scouring the Napoleonic literature may once again find in print two thrilling studies of Napoleon's armies: John R. Elting's "Swords Around a Throne: Napoleon's Grande Armée," newly reprinted by Da Capo, and A. G. Macdonell's "Napoleon and His Marshals," just republished in Prion's Lost Treasures series. (Macdonell's book may contain the best bibliography in all scholarly literature: he proposes to "confine myself to the simple statement that every single detail of this book has been taken from one or other work of history, reference, reminiscence, or biography.")

Elting is a terrifyingly comprehensive social historian of Napoleon's Army, who seems to know every regiment of the Grande Armée down to the typical smell of its horses' manure. He makes the point that even before Napoleon's rise to power the French Revolutionary Army had been forcibly democratized—the mob had become the Army—and therefore reduced, or perhaps elevated, to a kind of inspired amateurism. Like the North Vietnamese Army in our time, it had the benefit of an extreme simplicity of approach. Its adversaries, Elting writes, "did their professional best and eventually found that some vulgarian of a French ex-sergeant, whom they had completely outmaneuvered, would fail to recognize the hopelessness of his situation, or that a recent captain of French artillery (i.e. Napoleon) would show a shocking disregard for the accepted system of strategy and tactics." A contemporary German observer wrote, "Everything about these Frenchmen was supple and light," and, while noting that they were "lacking all organization," he said that each man had "his musket, his cartridge box and cockade of the national colors, and all were brave and energetic."

In a series of forced moves, the Army had made the crucial transition from a professional army of "walking muskets," led by an aristocratic officer, to a modern mass army, led by an officer corps advanced on merit and moved, if not sustained, by abstract ideas and symbols. The men who rose from the ranks to lead this new kind of Army would become Napoleon's marshals. At a time when throughout Europe the officer class was restricted, by both law and custom, to the aristocracy, Napoleon's marshals were the sons of merchants and millers and innkeepers and tanners and barrel coopers. Like contemporary gang leaders, they had to make their authority manifest through bold, unmistakable symbols—above all, by ostentatious acts of personal bravery, but also by dazzling displays of bravura elegance. As Marshal Joachim Murat, the innkeeper's son, galloped across the snows at Eylau for a last, desperate assault on the Russian armies, he had a gold-embroidered uniform, ostrich feathers in his hat, a great leopard skin over his saddle, and a gold-headed cane in his hand. (The Mafia hit man, in black, is still Corsican, feudal; the Crips and the Bloods are Napoleonic.)

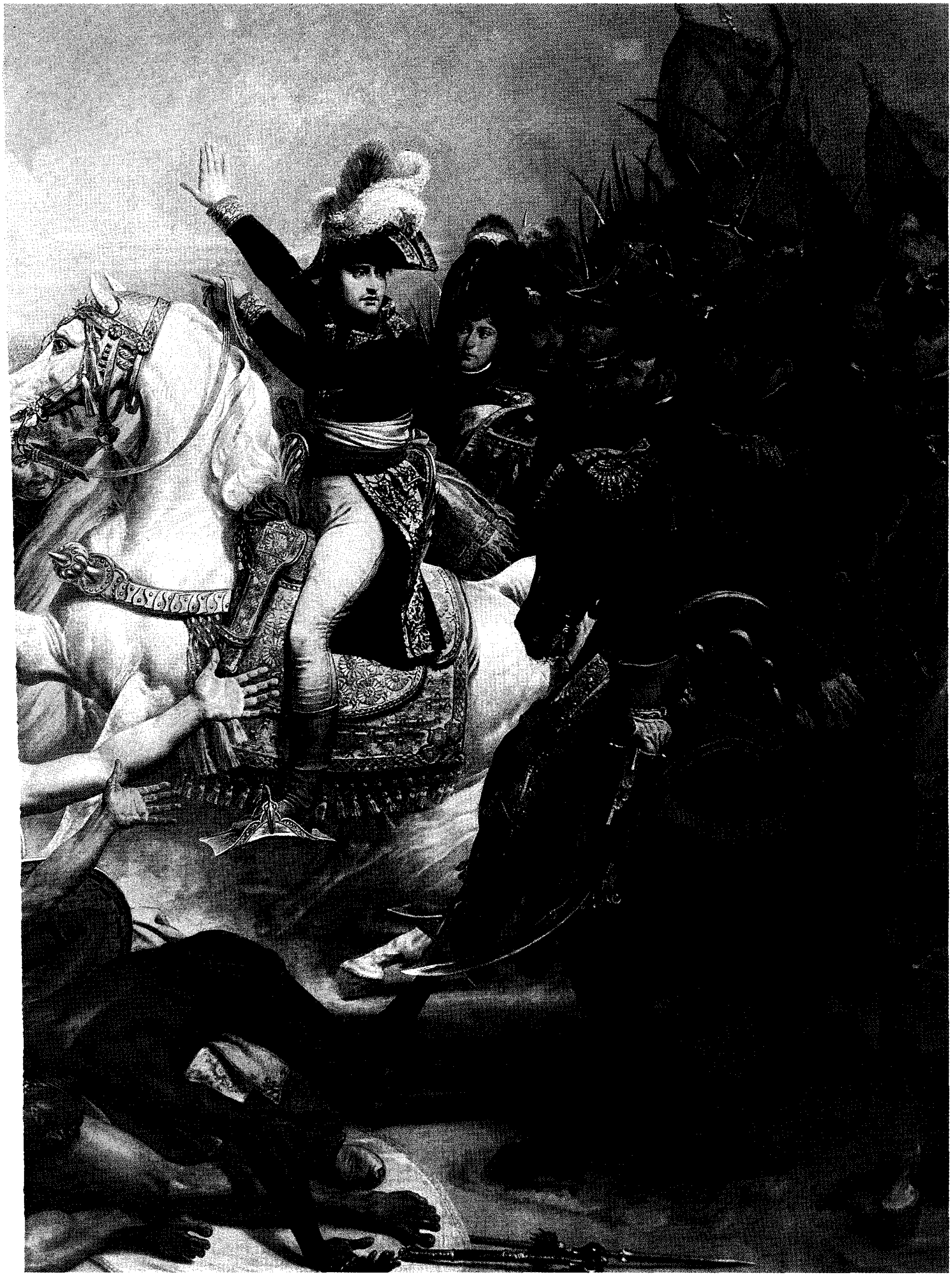
Napoleon's crucial insight was that it was not, in the long run, the romance of the nation, or of the cause, or of the Republic, that would keep such an army in battle. It was the army's romance of itself, of its own existence. Napoleon was the first to understand that the mass army, like the mass society—it is their paradox—is moved not by a simple calculation of self-interest but by the power of extremely abstract and obviously manufactured mythologies, symbols, and legends: by advertising. Elting points out that official national flags were unknown to the pre-Revolutionary Royal Army, and that it was only the National Convention of 1791 which ordered all flags to be the tricolor. In the Italian campaign, Napoleon gave each fighting group a personalized slogan to attach to its colors: "The Brave 18th, I know you: No enemy can resist you"; "The Terrible 75th which nothing can stop"; "I am confident, the 32nd is there"; the "Incomparable" 9th. Napoleon seems to have known not just his regiments by character but most of his soldiers by name. (In 1807, as Emperor, he wrote from Poland about a corporal of the 15th Ligne, saying that he had heard he was drinking too much, and ought to stop.)

As Elting explains, the Revolution had abolished all the royal decorations (their holders had been "invited" to turn them in at the local town hall) and replaced them with written good-boy, fine-work certificates, which inspired nobody. Napoleon invented a new series of decorations from scratch. He distributed medals on the Dodo's principle—that all must have prizes. There were silver-mounted muskets, carbines, and drumsticks; axes, silver trumpets, and an insignia of the



GIRAUDON/ART RESOURCE

"Battle of the Pyramids, 21 July 1798," by



Baron Gros, is not a romantic vision of an uglier reality; it is a transcription of the way Napoleon and his Army actually rode into battle.

"Three Wild Turkeys."

• •

"flaming grenade." There was even a special ear trumpet awarded to a captain who went deaf after a mine explosion.

Napoleon was essentially extending to a democratic army the system of honors that Louis XIV had introduced at Versailles in the seventeenth century. The King had grasped that the contentious and insurrectional nobles could be pacified and controlled by an absurdly transparent system of baubles and honors: a special coat; an invitation to Marly, the King's second house, for breakfast; a thousand small, meaningless rewards. Napoleon made the discovery, later to be remade by every P.R. man and politician in America, that a cynically engendered change in packaging could change real loyalties and feelings. "Baubles?" he said once. "It is with baubles that men are led.... You imagine that an enemy army is defeated by analysis? Never. In a republic, soldiers performed great deeds largely through a sense of honor. It was the same under Louis XIV." (He saw the link.) The most famous French order—the Légion d'Honneur, whose red ribbon even writers occasionally get to wear on their lapels—is of Napoleonic origin. Again and again, one is impressed by Napoleon's extreme diligence in creating symbols and regalia—for example, the invention of the "eagles," the golden figures at the end of the regimental flagstaffs, whose loss was meant to be, and became, more grievous for a regiment than any number of casualties.

Of course, the baubles didn't win the battles by themselves. Like every other general, Napoleon usually won when he had more men and more guns than the enemy, and lost when he didn't. But the men came to fire the guns because they had convinced themselves that the baubles were worth having. The vision of Napoleonic glory that one sees in the pictures of Baron Gros and Jacques-Louis David, and even of Delacroix—the fetishism of tight breeches and swaying plumes and silken jackets, the obsessive display of flags and standards, a stiff breeze blowing everywhere, the tonality of scarlet and gold—is not a romantic version of an uglier reality. It is a real transcription of a willed romance.

The Italian campaign left Napoleon, at the age of twenty-seven, the military hero of France but without a role in government. The Directory that ruled France, a weak five-man cabinet, thought it wise to keep Napoleon at a distance, and so, accepting a plan devised by Talleyrand, the all-party, all-weather Foreign Minister, it sent the General off to colonize Egypt. Although the plan demonstrated a certain imperial logic—after all, the British controlled most of the rest of the Mediterranean—one smells a classical allusion just beneath the surface, rising from that room above the café. Far from France, cut off from all news, Napoleon set himself up as a little philosopher-king—or, to be more accurate, an anthropologist-king, for in his circle the human sciences had trumped the practice of abstract thought. He had brought with him from Paris to Egypt a clutch of intellectuals, and he founded an institute to which he and they could report. Their interests were historical and archeological, and culminated in Champollion's decoding of the Rosetta stone. In Egypt, Napoleon also betrayed Josephine for the first time: he had a long affair with Pauline Fourès, the wife of one of his officers, and she became known as the General's Cleopatra.

The first triumphs of the Egyptian campaign soured, and a long subsidiary campaign into Syria failed disastrously. Yet Napoleon, though he abandoned his troops in Egypt (where the British eventually finished them off), was able to return to Paris as a hero. Once there, he swore loyalty to the Directory and began plotting to overthrow it. Schom is very good on the unbelievably sloppy and disorganized coup d'état that took place on November 9, 1799—the coup known as 18 Brumaire, which Tocqueville called "one of the most badly conceived and executed coups d'état imaginable." It left Napoleon in the role of First Consul. He propagated a constitution, which, confirmed by a dubious plebiscite (he got more votes than there were voters), made him the effective dictator of France. (Three years later, a referendum declared him consul for life.)

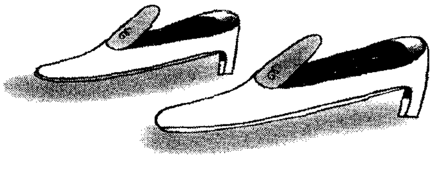
For a brief time, Napoleon ruled pretty well, making peace with the Americans, with the Russians, and even with the British. The line of intellectuals and artists and philosophers who believed in him—who believed that he was the rational guarantor of the Revolution's best values—outdoes even those who believed in Stalin. Yet the peace did not survive, and soon Napoleon's war-making took on a compulsive touch. In 1805, having defeated the Austrians and the Russians at Austerlitz, he embarked on a scheme to invade England, building a national flotilla of unseaworthy flat-bottomed boats and organizing a combined fleet with the Spanish. Vast sums of money and amounts of attention were spent on this, and Schom writes convincingly on its essential impracticality, not to say absurdity. (Even if Napoleon could have got the boats across the Channel, he could never have held the country with the number of soldiers who could be ferried over. This is a point that Hitler didn't get, either.) The Combined Fleet, meanwhile, under the command of the incompetent Admiral Villeneuve, was the fleet that Nelson totalled off the coast of Spain, near Trafalgar, and that was the end of that. The man deserves his column.

The Napoleonic era lasted so long—Europe was at war for more than ten years—that no narrator can help getting bogged down in the details of the campaigns. Napoleon did everything he could to force his way into absolutist Europe, even divorcing Josephine and marrying the daughter of the Austrian Emperor. But none of it worked. (When he started losing battles, she stuck with Dad.) From Syria to Germany, the sheer scale of his engagements is amazing, and awful, in both the archaic and the modern sense of the word. One can, with gruesome connoisseurship, pick favorite engagements, marshals, and campaigns as subjects. The Russian campaign is the most "epic," producing, as it did, "War and Peace" and that unforgettable map of the Grande Armée bleeding away over the winter from a broad red belt into a wispy thread. The German campaign was perhaps the most historically decisive, since Napoleon's attack on the little German states ultimately produced, in reaction, modern Germany.

But it was with the earlier Peninsular campaign, where the French invaders fought a long, inconclusive guerrilla war with the Spanish and the Portuguese and their English supporters, that the modern horror began. Spain is the one place where no romance of Napoleon exists or ever could. The Napoleonic Army committed massacres left and right—albeit against a Catholic enemy that thought all Frenchmen might have tails or might be Jews—and the premise of the Enlightenment order that Napoleon embodied, if in severe and militarized form, seemed exploded. Is there a greater example of experience forcing a new style than the transformation of European painting from David's "Oath of the Horatii," of 1784, which presaged the forces that set Napoleonism in motion, to Goya's "Third of May," painted on the eve of Waterloo? In the David, the mechanical, pinwheel-like motion of the men taking the oath is meant to be contrasted with the collapsing disordered pile of feminine emotion. In the Goya, the masculine order has become the firing squad, and sympathy must go to the collapsing pile of the massacred. This is a change in style that goes beyond choosing good guys and bad guys: it reorders what it is that good and bad look like. If Napoleon was the creator of the first Romantic army, he was also—and perhaps more important—the author of the first Romantic disillusionment. From Beethoven to Goethe and on to Goya, the generation of liberals who had looked to the French Army as the bearer of reason found it to be a disaster. (The most famous disillusionment is Beethoven's; he removed the dedication of the "Eroica" Symphony after Napoleon declared himself Emperor, in 1804.)

The standard French apology for Napoleon's war-making is that he was encircled by diehard reactionary empires intent on restoring the ancien régime, which would be even worse. Dictators, of course, always say that they are encircled: it is in their nature to be encircled, since anyone not being dictated to is by definition part of the encirclement. But the apologists have a point: when the British oligarchs won, they *did* try to bring back the ancien régime, and it *was* even worse.

Napoleon never quite lost the faith of the French people. In the aftermath of the defeat in Leipzig, in 1813, he abdicated and went off to rule the island of Elba, where he took long salt baths and read and reread "The Arabian Nights." After only a year in exile, he decided to escape, and was quickly welcomed back to France. For a hundred and thirty-six days, he re-created the Empire—the marshals came back to his side, and the portly King Louis XVIII, who had been dropped on the throne by the English, ran away—and then marched north to Belgium to confront the allied armies of England and Germany. The battle was in doubt until the end of the day, when the Prussians, under Blücher, made one last, surprising charge, and Napoleon, sending his men out, saw them retreat in confusion, the democratic army turning back into the chaotic mob from which it had emerged. This time, he was sent to a smaller and more distant island, St. Helena, which, in a sour irony, had been a French possession ceded to England in the brief peace of 1804. Fat and wheezing, the little Emperor passed the rest of his days reading "Paul et Virginie," whose theme of love gone wrong he strangely applied to his own fate, and trying to restore his health by riding a seesaw that he had installed in his library. Schom is a believer in the theory that Napoleon's death, on St. Helena, was caused by arsenic poisoning, and he produces some new evidence to show that this is so, though he suspects that it was Napoleon's remnant court, rather than the eager British, who did the poisoning.



NAPOLEON'S reputation has been riding the seesaw every since. Despite his legend as the archetypal French hero, he was not a nationalist in the modern sense. His references and his world view were largely classical, referring to a unified European and Roman civilization. Even the satellite republics he created in Italy and Germany were justified by Roman imperial precedent. Various versions of empire appear in the Napoleonic iconography: David makes him Roman; Ingres makes him Carolingian. Often, he doesn't even seem particularly French. Had history taken a slightly different turn, and the boat from Corsica gone, like General Paoli's, to London instead of Paris, it is easy to imagine Nabulio (renamed Nathaniel) Bonaparte winning the battles for the other side. Had that boat taken yet a different, and perhaps more likely, turn, Bonaparte would have ended up an American patriot, with a naval victory or two in the War of 1812, and a liberal-arts college in Ohio named after him. (The absence of American Bonapartism is due to the fact that every tycoon already knows he is Napoleon.)

Yet though he was not a nationalist himself, as much as anyone he was the unintentional begetter of modern nationalism. His career helped bring about the dissolution of the cosmopolitan, universalist ideal it once was taken to embody. Most obviously, it helped create (in Germany especially), by imperial aggression, the conditions for romantic nationalism. All the early Caspar David Friedrich paintings and drawings, for instance, get their radical impetus from the need to find a visual protest against French classicism. A new language of form was born in the effort to negate the order, the authority, and the clarity of Imperial style. Friedrich's famous image of a tiny French chasseur about to be swallowed up by the vast Northern forest is the herald of the coming opposition of national mysticism to imperial rationality.

In a more practical way, Napoleon solved a crucial problem of national size. His conquests created states that were of the right acreage to become modern nation-states. Places like Corsica and the German principalities were too small to survive; all Europe, as he found out, expensively, was too big to rule. But states the size of Napoleonic France and post-Napoleonic Germany were just right. In a generous mood, you could say that Napoleon's forced bonding of little states into big ones, along with his insistence on procedural, rule-bound constitutional government, created the conditions for the modern liberal democracy.

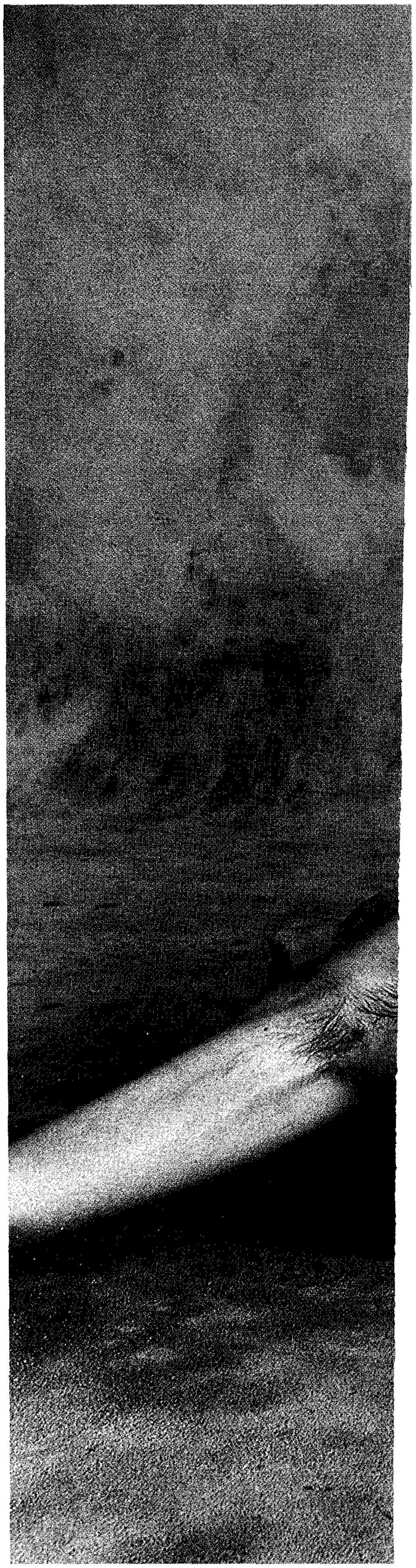
In France itself, oddly, the Imperial moment, of all the great moments in French history, seems the most remote. The Versailles seventeenth-century France of the Sun King and Saint-Simon—*ce pays-ci*, charming, witty, brilliant, incestuous, malicious—is still there in the salons, and the much later careerist, corrupt, nineteenth-century France of Napoleon's nephew Louis-Napoleon is in the streets and boulevards. Though it is possible to trace a line of descent from Napoleon to de Gaulle and current Gaullism, it's a little misleading. The style of autocratic rule in the Fifth Republic is essentially monarchical: the ideal role of the President is one of lofty consultation, with the details left to his ministers—not at all like Napoleon's one-man state.

Napoleon's legacy is not a reminder of the power of pure action. It has become instead one more demonstration of the power of words and abstract symbolism to create a reality of their own. In this way, the outward show of the Napoleonic era—the uniforms, the bobbing plumes, the sabres, the ostrich skins and gold-headed canes—was the most lasting thing about it. Napoleon spoke of the man on horseback, but maybe what mattered in the long run was what the man on horseback was wearing. Napoleon may have been a monster, yet it's hard not to feel that the romance of Imperial style has developed an independent existence in the world's imagination, and one not wholly evil. It seems to fill a deep human need for display, order, glamour that no other system of modern honor has yet quite managed to do. Even A.J. Liebling could write, a century later, on his first sight of Napoleon's tomb, "The gold light, the marble, and the massed battle flags made an image of Napoleonic glory that has always helped me understand the side of Stendhal that is least rational. If brief exposure to the glories of the Empire, a hundred years later, could so dazzle me, I find it easy to pardon the effect upon a lieutenant of dragoons eighteen years old, riding in the midst of the Sixth Light Dragoons, uniforms bottle-green, red waistcoat, white breeches, helmet with crest, horsetail, and red cockade."

That kind of Napoleonic glamour is everywhere in Paris. You can't ride on the Métro without passing a battlefield, or take a walk without crossing a marshal. For countless generations, toy soldiers have nearly always been Imperial soldiers. In every toy store in Paris, you find shelf upon shelf of precisely rendered and particularized Imperial chasseurs and drummer boys and dragoons and grenadiers—the Grande Armée in miniature, bayonets fixed, ready to charge. Glory looks best from a very great distance, or on a very small scale. ♦

BATHERS

"A beautiful print," Irving Penn once declared, "is a thing in itself, not just a halfway house on the way to the page." A good thing, then, that no fewer than four exhibitions of the master photographer's work go on view this month—in San Francisco, Chicago (a major retrospective at the Art Institute), Paris, and Berlin. The Paris show, at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, includes the fourteen-picture suite "The Bath (1967, San Francisco)," which contains the lyrical image at the right.



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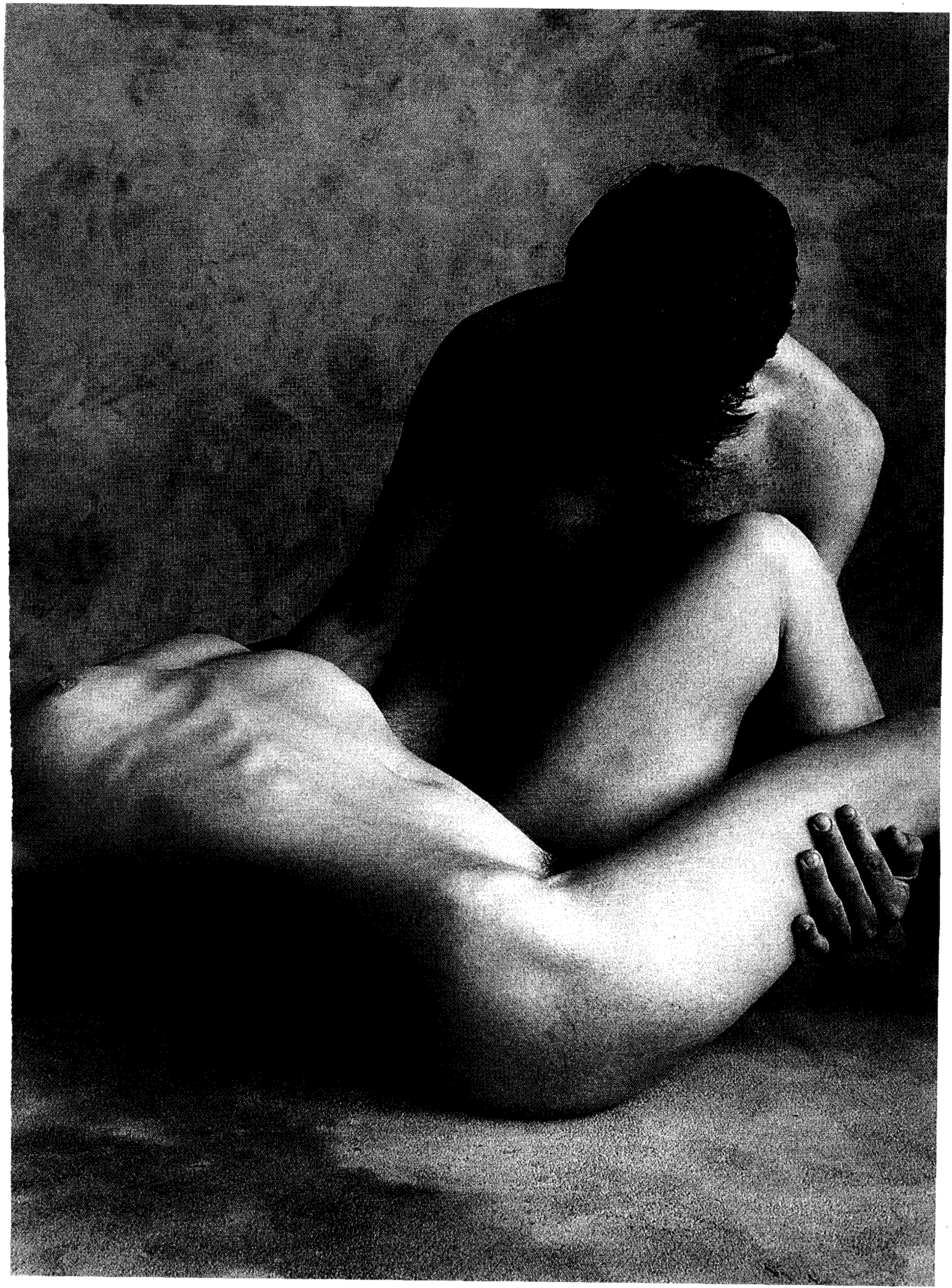
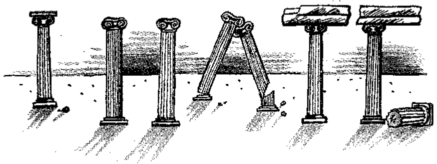


FICTION

HELEN ON EIGHTY-SIXTH STREET

What can a Greek god do for a young girl?

BY WENDI KAUFMAN



I HATE Helen. That's all I can say. I hate her. Helen McGuire is playing Helen, so Mr. Dodd says, because, out of the entire sixth grade, she most embodies Helen of Troy. Great. Helen McGuire had no idea who Helen of Troy even was! When she found out, well, you should have seen her—flirting with all the boys, really acting the part. And me? Well, I know who Helen was. I am pissed.

My mother doesn't understand. Not that I expected she would. When I told her the news, all she said was "Ah, the face that launched a thousand ships." She didn't even look up from her book. Later, at dinner, she apologized for quoting Marlowe. Marlowe is our cat.

At bedtime I told my mother, "You should have seen the way Helen acted at school. It was disgusting, flirting with the boys."

Mom tucked the sheets up close around my chin, so that only my head was showing, my body covered mummy style. "Vita," she said, "it sounds like she's perfect for the part."

So, I can't play Helen. But, to make it worse, Mr. Dodd said I have to be in the horse. I can't believe it. The horse! I wanted to be one of the Trojan women—Andromache, Cassandra, or even Hecuba. I know all their names. I told Mr. Dodd this, and then I showed him I could act. I got really sad and cried out about the thought of the body of my husband, Hector, being dragged around the walls of my city. I wailed and beat my fist against my chest. "A regular Sarah Heartburn" was all he said.

"Well, at least you get to be on the winning team," my mother said when I told her about the horse. This didn't make me feel any better. "It's better than being Helen. It's better than being blamed for the war," she told me.

Mom was helping me make a shield for my costume. She said every soldier had a shield that was big enough to carry his body off the field. I told her I wasn't going to be a body on the field, that I was going to survive, return home.

"Bring the shield, just in case," she said. "It never hurts to have a little help."

MOM and I live on West Eighty-sixth Street. We have lived in the same building, in the same apartment, my entire life. My father has been gone for almost three years. The truth is that he got struck with the wanderlust—emphasis on "lust," my mother says—and we haven't heard from him since.

"Your father's on his own odyssey," my mother said. And now it's just me and Mom and Marlowe and the Keatses, John and John, our parakeets, or "pair of Keats," as Mom says. When I was younger, when Dad first left and I still believed he was coming back, it made me happy that we still lived in the same building. I was happy because he would always know where to find us. Now that I am older, I know the city is not that big. It is easy to be found and easy to stay lost.

And I also know not to ask about him. Sometimes Mom hears things through old friends—that he has travelled across the ocean, that he is living on an island in a commune with some people she called "the lotus eaters," that he misses us.

Once I heard Mr. Farfel, the man who's hanging around Mom now, ask why she stayed in this apartment after my father left. "The rent's stabilized," she told him, "even if the relationship wasn't."

AT school, Helen McGuire was acting weird because I'm going to be in the horse with Tommy Aldridge. She wanted to know what it's like: "Is it really cramped in there? Do you have to sit real close together?"

I told her it's dark, and we must hold each other around the waist and walk to make the horse move forward. Her eyes grew wide at this description. "Lucky you," she said.

Lucky me? She gets to stand in the center of the stage alone, her white sheet barely reaching the middle of her thighs, and say lines like "This destruction is all my fault" and "Paris, I do love you." She gets to cry. Why would she think I'm lucky? The other day at rehearsal, she was standing onstage waiting for her cue, and I heard Mrs. Reardon, the stage manager, whisper, "That Helen is as beautiful as a statue."

At home Old Farfel is visiting again. He has a chair in Mom's department. The way she describes it, a chair is a very good thing. Mom translates old books written in Greek and Latin. She is working on the longest graduate degree in the history of Columbia University. "I'll be dead before I finish," she always says.

Old Farfel has been coming around a lot lately, taking Mom and me to dinner at Italian places downtown. I don't like to be around when he's over.

"I'm going to Agamemnon's apartment to rehearse," I told Mom.

Old Farfel made a small laugh, one that gets caught in the back of the throat and never really makes it out whole. I want to tell him to relax, to let it out. He smells like those dark cough drops, the kind that make your eyes tear and your head feel like it's expanding. I don't know how she can stand him.

FILIP PAGOWSKI

"Well, the play's the *thing*," Old Farfel said. "We're all just players strutting and fretting our hour on the stage." Mom smiled at this, and it made me wish Old Farfel would strut his hours at his apartment and not at our place. I hate the way he's beginning to come around all the time.

WHEN I get back from rehearsal, Mom is spinning Argus. It's what she does when she gets into one of her moods. Argus, our dog, died last summer when I was away at camp. My mother can't stand to part with anything, so she keeps Argus, at least his ashes, in a blue-and-white vase that sits on our mantel.

Once I looked into the vase. I'd expected to see gray stuff, like the ash at the end of a cigarette. Instead, there was black sand and big chunks of pink like shells, just like at the beach.

My mother had the vase down from the mantel and was twirling it in her hands. I watched the white figures on it turn, following each other, running in a race that never ends.

"Life is a cycle," my mother said. The spinning made me dizzy. I didn't want to talk about life. I wanted to talk about Helen.

"Helen, again with Helen. Always Helen," my mother said. "You want to know about Helen?"

I nod my head.

"Well, her father was a swan and her mother was too young to have children. You don't want to be Helen. Be lucky you're a warrior. You're too smart to be ruled by your heart."

"And what about beauty? Wasn't she the most beautiful woman in the world?" I asked.

Mom looked at the Greek vase. "Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all ye need to know."

She is not always helpful.

"Manhattan is a rocky island," Mom said at dinner. "There is no proper beach, no shore." My mother grew up in the South, near the ocean, and there are times when she still misses the beach. Jones, Brighton, or even Coney Island beaches don't come close for her. I know when she starts talking about the water that she's getting restless. I hope this means that Old Farfel won't be hanging around too long.

Every night I write a letter to my father. I don't send them—I don't know where to send them—but, still, I write them. I keep the letters at the back of my closet in old shoeboxes. I am on my third box. It's getting so full that I have to keep the lid tied down with rubber bands.

I want to write, "Mom is talking about the water again. I think this means she is thinking of you. We are both thinking of you, though we don't mention your name. Are you thinking of us? Do you ever sit on the shore at night and wonder what we're doing, what we're thinking? Do you miss us as much as we miss you?"

But instead I write, "I am in a play about the Trojan War. I get to wear a short white tunic, and I ambush people from inside a big fake horse. Even though we win the war, it will be many, many years before I return home. Until I see my family again. In this way, we are the same. I will have many adventures. I will meet giants and witches and see strange lands. Is that what you are doing? I wish you could come to the play."

Old Farfel is going to a convention in Atlanta. He wants Mom to go with him. From my bed, I can hear them talking about it in the living room. It would be good for her, he says. I know that Mom doesn't like to travel. She can't even go to school and back without worrying about the apartment—if she turned the gas off, if she fed the cat, if she left me enough money. She tells him that she'll think about it.

"You have to move on, Victoria," he tells her. "Let yourself go to new places."

"I'm still exploring the old places," she says.

He lets the conversation drop.

Mom said once that she travelled inside herself when Dad left. I didn't really understand, but it was one of the few times I saw her upset. She was sitting in her chair, at her desk, looking tired. "Mom, are you in there?" I waved my hand by her face.

"I'm not," she said. "I'm on new ground. It's a very different place."

"Are you thinking about Dad?"

"I was thinking how we all travel differently, Vita. Some of us don't even have to leave the house."

"Dad left the house."

"Sometimes it's easier to look outside than in," she said.

That night I dreamed about a swan. A swan that flies in circles over the ocean. This is not the dark water that snakes along the West Side Highway and slaps against the banks of New Jersey but the real ocean. Open water. Salty, like tears.

AT play practice, I watch the other girls dress up as goddesses and Trojan women. They wear gold scarves wound tight around their necks and foreheads. They all wear flowers in their hair and flat pink ballet slippers. I wear a white sheet taken from my bed. It is tied around the middle with plain white rope. I also wear white sneakers. I don't get to wear a gold scarf or flowers. Mr. Dodd wrote this play himself and is very picky about details. Tommy Aldridge, my partner in the horse, was sent home because his sheet had Ninja Turtles on it. "They did not have Ninja Turtles in ancient Greece," Mr. Dodd said.

Mr. Dodd helps Helen McGuire with her role. "You must understand," he tells her, "Helen is the star of the show. Men have travelled great distances just to fight for her. At the end, when you come onstage and look at all the damage you've caused, we must believe you're really upset by the thought that this is all your fault."

Helen nods and looks at him blankly.

"Well, at least try to think of something really sad."

OLD FARFEL is taking Mom out to dinner again. It's the third time this week. Mom says it is a very important dinner, and I am not invited. Not that I would want to go, but I wasn't even asked. Mom brought in takeout, some soup and a cheese sandwich, from the coffee shop on the corner.

I eat my soup, alone in the kitchen, from a blue-and-white paper cup. I remember once at a coffee shop Mom held the same type of cup out in front of me.

"See this building, Vita?" she said. She pointed to some columns that were drawn on the front of her cup. It wasn't really a building—more like a cartoon drawing. "It's the Parthenon," she said. "It's where the Greeks made sacrifices to Athena."

"How did they make sacrifices?" I asked.

"They burned offerings on an altar. They believed this would bring them what they wanted. Good things. Luck."

I finish my soup and look at the tiny

R.S.V.P.

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announcements

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The above restaurants join in toasting the American Museum of Natural History for its exhibition, *The Nature of Diamonds.*

COME TO BARNES & NOBLE! Meet author Christopher Buckley who will read from and sign copies of his humorous collection, *Wry Martinis*. Wed., Nov. 19, 1997, 7:30–8:30 P.M. at Barnes & Noble Union Square, 33 E. 17th Street.

ELEVEN FROM *THE NEW YORKER*. The Alderich Museum of Contemporary Art presents an exhibition, curated by Roz Chast, of eleven *New Yorker* cartoonists. The eleven are Roz Chast, Michael Crawford, Liza Donnelly, Ed Koren, Lee Lorenz, Bob Mankoff, Michael Maslin, Victoria Roberts, Danny Shanahan, Mick Stevens and Jack Ziegler. The exhibition runs Nov. 16, 1997 through Jan. 11, 1998. 258 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT., 06877. Call 1-203-438-4519.

READ THIS so that others might, too. The second annual Letters for Literacy auction to benefit Literacy Partners' adult education programs will be held December 2 at Christie's. Celebrity hosts and authors will share their time and talent. Call 1-212-921-9096 for ticket information.

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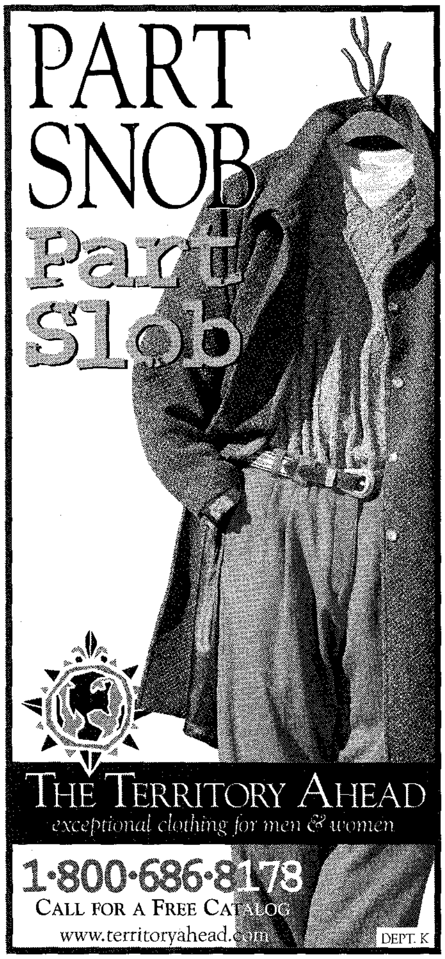
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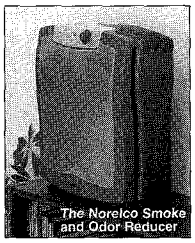
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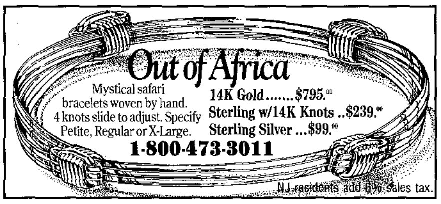
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building on the cup. In between the columns are the words "Our Pleasure to Serve You." I run my fingers across the flat lines of the Parthenon and trace the roof. I can almost imagine a tiny altar and the ceremonies that were performed there.

It is then that I get an idea. I find a pair of scissors on Mom's desk and cut through the thick white lip of the cup toward the lines of the little temple. I cut around the words "Our Pleasure to Serve You." Then I take the temple and the words and glue them to the back of my notebook. The blue-and-white lines show clearly against the cardboard backing. I get Argus's big metal water bowl from the kitchen and find some matches from a restaurant Old Farfel took us to for dinner.

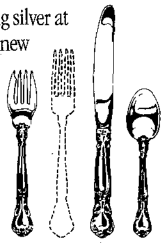
In my room I put on my white sheet costume and get all my letters to Dad out from the back of the closet. I know that I must say something, to make this more like a ceremony. I think of any Greek words I know: *spanakopita*, *moussaka*, *gyro*. They're only food words, but it doesn't matter. I decide to say them anyway. I say them over and over out loud until they blur into a litany, my own incantation: "*Spanakopitamoussakaandgyro, Spanakopitamoussakaandgyro, Spanakopitamoussakaandgyro.*"

As I say this, I burn handfuls of letters in the bowl. I think about what I want: to be Helen, to have my father come back. Everything I have ever heard says that wishes are granted in threes, so I throw in the hope of Old Farfel's leaving.

I watch as the words burn. Three years of letters go up in smoke and flame. I see blue-lined paper turn to black ashes; I see pages and pages, months and years, burn, crumble, and then disappear. The front of my white sheet has turned black from soot, and my eyes water and burn.

When I am done, I take the full bowl of ashes and hide it in the vase on the mantel, joining it with Argus. My black hands smudge the white figures on the vase, until their tunics become as sooty as my own. I change my clothes and open all the windows, but still Mom asks, when she comes home, about the burning smell. I told her I was cooking.

She looked surprised. Neither of us cooks much. "No more burnt offerings when I'm not home," she said. She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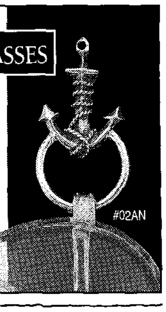
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looked upset and distracted, and Old Farfel didn't give that stifled laugh of his.

It's all my fault. Helen McGuire got chicken pox. Bad. She has been out of school for almost two weeks. I know my burning ceremony did this. "The show must go on," Mr. Dodd said when Achilles threw up the Tater Tots or when Priam's beard got caught in Athena's hair, but this is different. This is Helen. And it's my fault.

I know all her lines. Know them backward and forward. I have stood in our living room, towel tied around my body, and acted out the entire play, saying every line for my mother. When Mr. Dodd made the announcement about Helen at dress rehearsal, I stood up, white bedsheet slipping from my shoulders, and said in a loud, clear voice, "The gods must have envied me my beauty, for now my name is a curse. I have become hated Helen, the scourge of Troy."

Mr. Dodd shook his head and looked very sad. "We'll see, Vita. She might still get better," he said.

Helen McGuire recovered, but she didn't want to do the part because of all the pockmarks that were left. Besides, she wanted to be inside the horse with Tommy Aldridge. Mr. Dodd insisted that she still be Helen until her parents wrote that they didn't want her to be pressured, they didn't want to *do any further damage*, whatever that means. After that, the part was mine.

Tonight is the opening, and I am so excited. Mom is coming without Old Farfel. "He wasn't what I wanted," she said. I don't think she'll be seeing him anymore.

"What is beautiful?" I ask Mom before the play begins.

"Why are you so worried all the time about beauty? Don't you know how beautiful you are to me?"

"Would Daddy think I was beautiful?"

"Oh, Vita, he *always* thought you were beautiful."

"Would he think I was like Helen?"

She looked me up and down, from the gold lanyard snaked through my thick hair to my too tight pink ballet slippers.

"He would think you're more beautiful than Helen. I'm almost sorry he won't be here to see it."

"*Almost* sorry?"

"Almost. At moments like this—you

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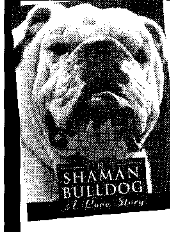
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look so good those ancient gods are going to come alive again with envy."

"What do you mean, come alive again? What are you saying about the gods?"

"Vita, Greek polytheism is an extinct belief," she said, and laughed. And then she stopped and looked at me strangely. "When people stopped believing in the gods, they no longer had power. They don't exist anymore. You must have known that."

Didn't I get the part of Helen? Didn't Old Farfel leave? I made all these things happen with my offering. I know I did. I don't believe these gods disappeared. At least not Athena.

"I don't believe you."

She looked at me, confused.

"You can't know for sure about the gods. And who knows? Maybe Daddy will even be here to see it."

"Sure," she said. "And maybe this time the Trojans will win the war."

I stand offstage with Mr. Dodd and wait for my final cue. The dry-ice machine has been turned on full blast and an incredible amount of fake smoke is making its way toward the painted backdrop of Troy. Hector's papier-mâché head has accidentally slipped from Achilles' hand and is now making a hollow sound as it rolls across the stage.

I peek around the thick red curtain, trying to see into the audience. The auditorium is packed, filled with parents and camcorders. I spot my mom sitting in the front row, alone. I try to scan the back wall, looking for a sign of him, a familiar shadow. Nothing.

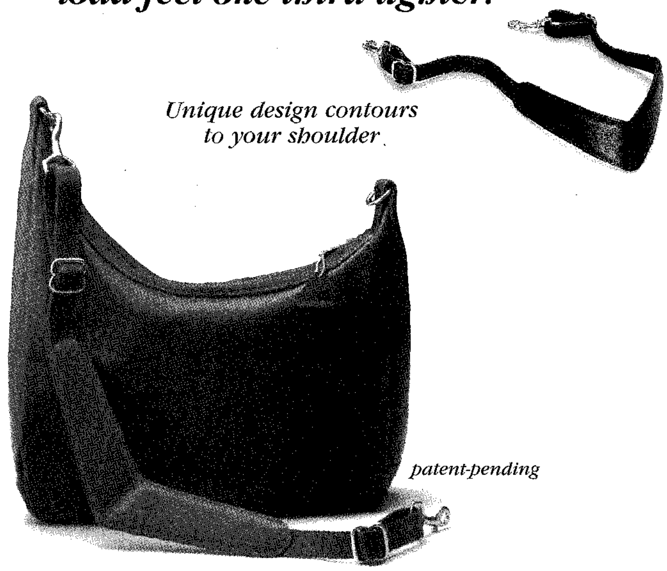
Soon I will walk out on the ramparts, put my hand to my forehead, and give my last speech. "Are you sure you're ready?" Mr. Dodd asks. I think he's more nervous than I am. "Remember," he tells me, "this is Helen's big moment. Think loss." I nod, thinking nothing.

"Break a leg," he says, giving me a little push toward the stage. "And try not to trip over the head."

The lights are much brighter than I had expected, making me squint. I walk through the smoky fog toward center stage.

"It is I, the hated Helen, scourge of Troy."

With the light on me, the audience



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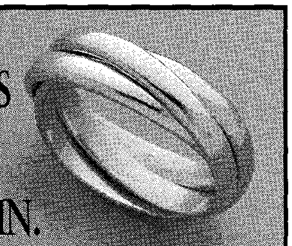

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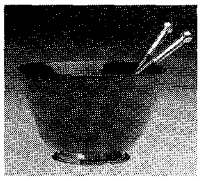

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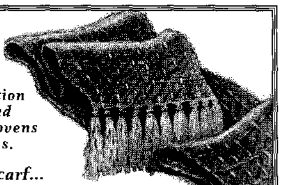

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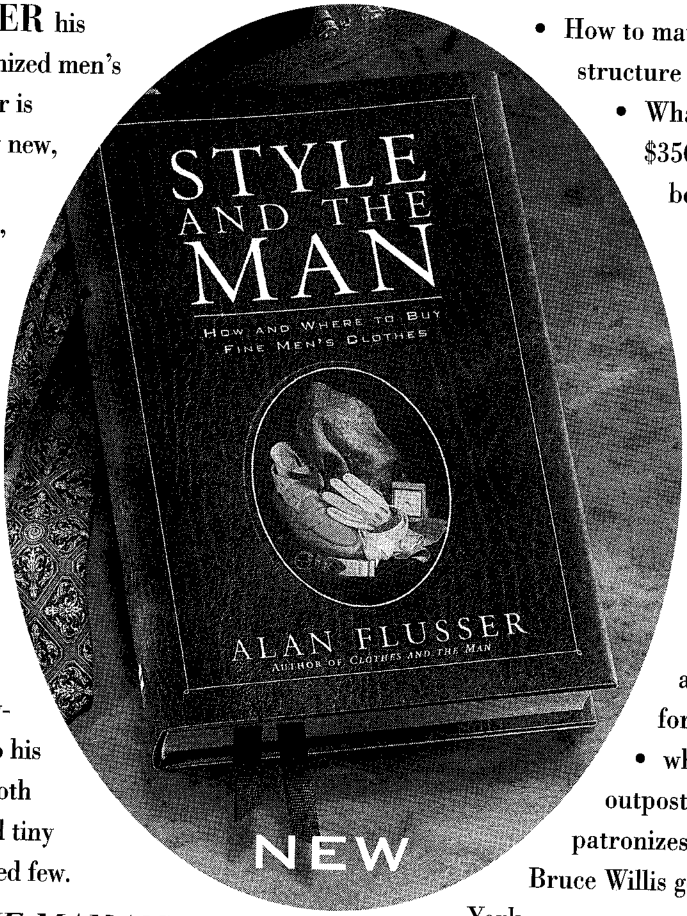
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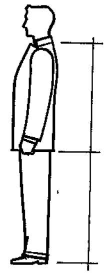

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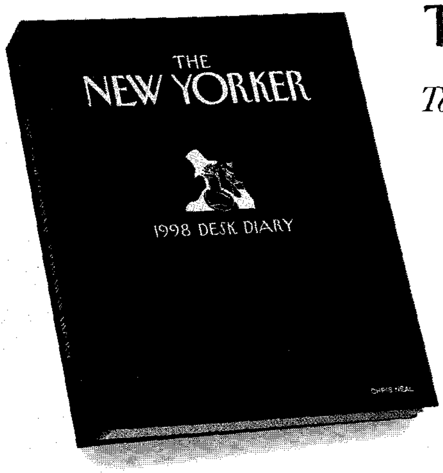
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is in shadow, like a big pit, dark and endless. I bow before the altar, feeling my tunic rise. "Hear my supplication," I say, pulling down a bit on the back of my tunic.

"Do not envy me such beauty—it has wrought only pain and despair."

I can hear Mr. Dodd, offstage, loudly whispering each line along with me.

"For this destruction, I know I will be blamed."

I begin to recite Helen's wrongs—beauty, pride, the abdication of Sparta—careful to enunciate clearly. "Troy, I have come to ask you to forgive me."

I'm supposed to hit my fist against my chest, draw a hand across my forehead, and cry loudly. Mr. Dodd has shown me this gesture, practiced it with me in rehearsal a dozen times—the last line, my big finish. The audience is very quiet. In the stillness there is a hole, an empty pocket, an absence. Instead of kneeling, I stand up, straighten my tunic, look toward the audience, and speak the line softly: "And to say goodbye."

There is a prickly feeling up the back of my neck. And then applause. The noise surrounds me, filling me. I look into the darkened house and, for a second, I can hear the beating of a swan's wings, and, then, nothing at all. ♦

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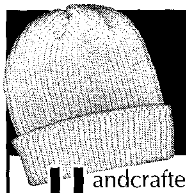

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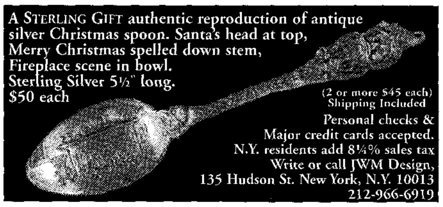

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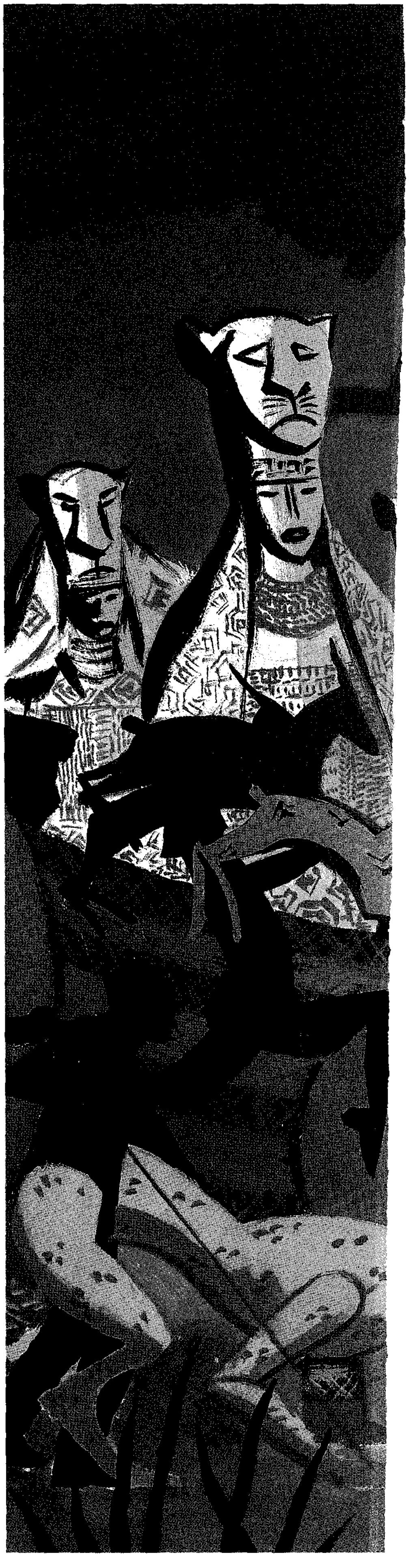
Disney takes the high road to profit.

BY JOHN LAHR

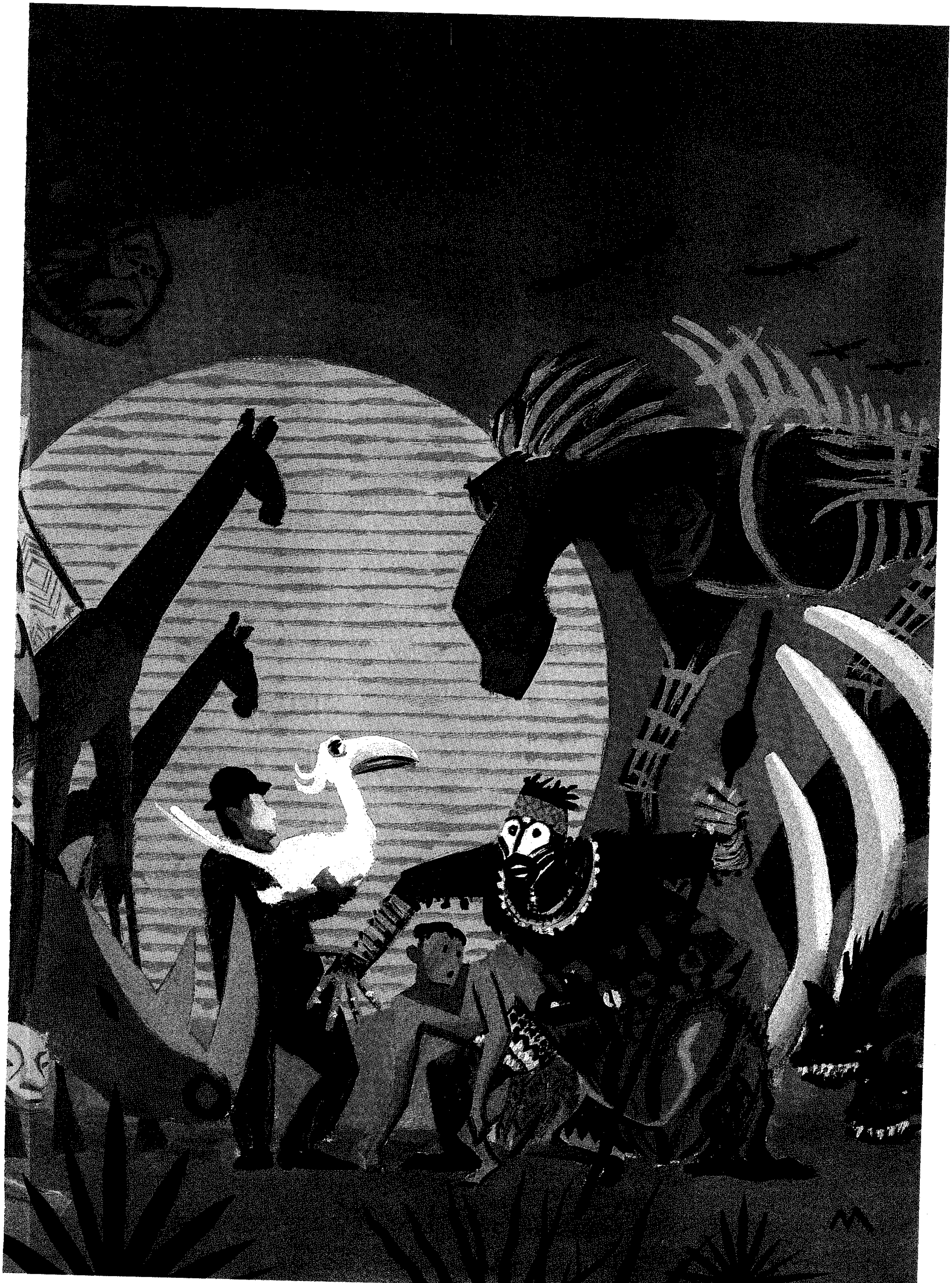
"THE fairground booth is eternal. Its heroes do not die; they simply change their aspects and assume new forms," the great Russian avant-garde director Vsevolod Meyerhold once said. With its noise, its novelty, its love of the grotesque, and its vivid design of movement, the fairground is a revolt against the deadliness of naturalism and an invitation for the public to play. This spirit has reëmerged, improbably, on West Forty-second Street, in the shape of an entire stylized menagerie of animals for Disney's "The Lion King," which opened last week at the sumptuously renovated New Amsterdam Theatre, under the bold scenic and sculptural hand of Julie Taymor, an avant-gardist who has been enlisted in the commercial ranks. (She earned her spurs in the early seventies as an apprentice to the Open Theatre's Joe Chaikin and the Bread and Puppet Theatre's Peter Schumann; she subsequently lived in Indonesia for four years, studying traditional and experimental puppetry.) With the show clearing a pre-opening advance of about twenty million dollars, Taymor has proved to Disney that taking the high theatrical road can be a good business decision. Here, on a superb protean set by Richard Hudson, she uses a wide range of puppet styles, African-inspired fabrics, Zulu chants, and a grab bag of borrowed but effective avant-garde staging tricks to turn "The Lion King" into a theatrical event far more textured and original than the film. The musical is a series of truly *vivants tableaux*—part pageant, part puppet show, part parade, with a touch of Las Vegas revue thrown in—telling the story of Simba, a princely lion cub who loses his kingdom, goes into exile, and returns to claim his inheritance from his epicene, malevolent Uncle Scar, a pooftah in the pride. The lineaments of the plot touch loosely on Adam, on Oedipus, and on the prodigal son, but what is really dramatized is not so much the longing for a return to paradise as the longing for a return of theatre to the extraordinary.

In film, audiences expect the unexpected, which is manufactured for them. They pay, but they don't play; their thrill is technological but not, in the fullest sense, imaginative. However, from the moment the animals arrive majestically onstage, called from the wings and down the aisles to Pride Rock for the birth of Simba by a mesmerizing Zulu chant and response led by Rafiki, the baboon-shaman (well played and sung by Tsidii Le Loka), the story is liberated from its soppy, hidebound cartoon naturalism. In the opening number, "Circle of Life," Taymor submerges the audience in a mythic universe; it's like being in a dream awake. Here the stage picture aspires to the sacred as much as to the spectacular. The air fills with the sound of African drumming, marimbas, and balophones, and the saffron sun rises out of a gray daybreak, as the animals make their slow, reverent, astonishing appearance. They are ingenious, beautifully painted constructions, made from materials like fibreglass, rope, clay, and foam rubber, which are harnessed to the actors and guided by them. This poetic interplay between puppeteer and puppet, where the human being is always visible within the animal, is, Taymor says, "a cubistic event, because the audience experiences the art from several perspectives." On close inspection, for instance, the giraffe's torso turns out to be a man on stilts, bent forward at a forty-five-degree angle in order to operate the front legs, which are attached to his arms; leaping gazelles are conjured up in miniature on a carrousel of rotating wheels that is pushed across the stage; Scar's mask is positioned above and behind the actor's head, and it can tilt forward almost two feet in front of his face



Julie Taymor's staging

DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI

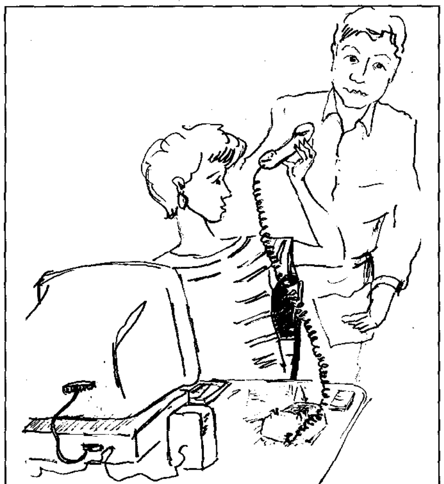


he Lion King" is liberated from hidebound cartoon naturalism; it's a mythic universe—like being in a dream awake.

to intensify his intrusive menace; and, perhaps best of all, the cheetah—whose back legs are strapped to the legs of its handler, Lana Gordon, while the front of the torso is controlled by her head and hands—glides stealthily across the savanna. Are the animals human or are the humans animal? As in a naïve painting, the boundaries blur after a while into a teeming, surreal anthropomorphic universe.

Taymor's scenic genius brings poetry to a story that is, essentially, kiddie pulp. In one exquisite stage picture, the audience stares out at an expanse of grassland; then the grass slowly rises from the ground to reveal an African chorus, with boxes of grass balanced on its many heads. The singers move in diagonals around the stage while puppeteers, racing between the rows of this moving meadow with miniatures of Simba and his father, Mufasa, give the illusion that the lions are running on the plains. It's an image of overwhelming lyric beauty, and it resonates far beyond the bounds of the story. In another scene, a backdrop of painted wildebeests and a series of rollers on which miniature wildebeests of increasing size revolve create the sensational impression of a wildebeest stampede; there's also a thrilling visual moment when one of Simba's sidekicks, a miniature of the motormouth meerkat Timon (well handled by Max Casella, who really gets into it) falls from a limb above a waterfall into a pool of snapping crocodiles. Taymor does lose her way in Simba's "I Just Can't Wait to Be King," a silly fantasia that takes the story nowhere, and in the embarrassing aerial love ballet (a kind of cabaret trapeze turn) that accompanies Garth Fagan's earthbound choreography for "Can You Feel the Love Tonight." In general, however, the mind is filled with such an exhilarating sense of wonder that the gee-whizzery of the banal spoken English—"Carnivores. Oy!" Timon exclaims—hardly seems to matter.

Indeed, the show's high visual style is in sharp contrast to its low verbal one. When Zulu words are chanted by the ensemble of twenty-five, the effect is eloquent and magical; when the script falls back into Disneyspeak, it loses some of its lustre and its illusion of authenticity. As a result, the show, for all its excitement, is spectacular without being moving. "Get this thing off me!" the hornbill Zazu bleats at one point, when the curtain falls on him, leaving the unfunny bird unfortunately still conscious. "It looks like a shower curtain from the



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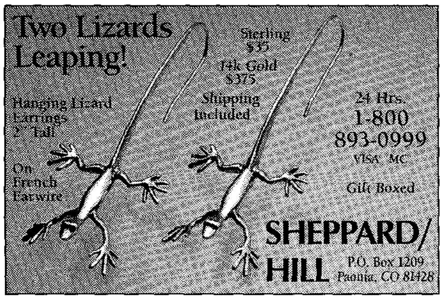

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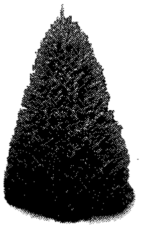

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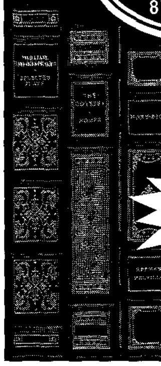

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Guggenheim gift shop!" Where the production really loses ground, however, is in the traditional musical score, by Elton John and Tim Rice. The lyrics are a conventional thesaurus job: they manage to be simple without being fresh. "What did my brother have that I don't have?" asks Scar, in a lazy, unworthy borrowing of the Cowardly Lion's "What have they got that I ain't got?" And for dopiness on Broadway I don't think "Hakuna Matata"—a Zulu catchphrase that means "No Worries"—can be topped:

> Hakuna Matata! What a wonderful phrase!
> Hakuna Matata! Ain't no passing craze!

Finally, "The Lion King" turns the predatory anarchy of nature into a fairy tale of harmony—an ersatz Eden, where the lion doesn't lie down just with the lamb but with an entire zoo. Simba marries Nala (the excellent Heather Headley), and, in the musical's last beat, an heir is held before the kneeling, reverent kingdom. Paradise, once lost, is regained. Disney's world is one without shadow, and the production is in keeping with the spirit of the pleasure dome in which it is housed. "I had rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad," it says on the ceiling of the New Amsterdam's restored bar; the stage, whose proscenium arch is sculptured with peacocks, was built expressly for the escape of de-luxe spectacle. Florenz Ziegfeld mounted his lavish Follies here, and "The Lion King" seems to share Ziegfeld's commercial karma. Ziegfeld used women to eroticize wealth; Disney uses animals to sentimentalize it. The creators of "The Lion King" would probably call this the "circle of life"; I call it brilliant Business Art, and the hell with it. ♦

BAGGAGE CLAIM

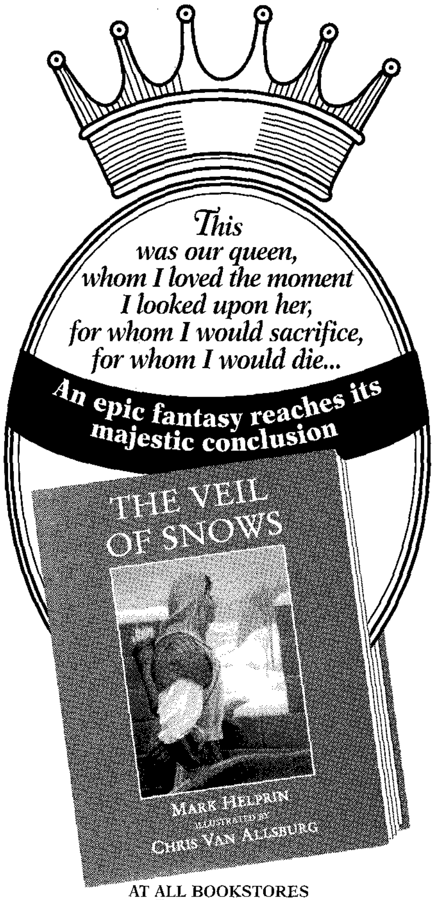
Mismatched sisters on a mission in "The Batting Cage."

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

MAX MILLER

YOU think you know more or less what you're in for when you first see the set of Joan Ackermann's "The Batting Cage," at the Vineyard Theatre. It's a room in a Holiday Inn, decorated in tepid green and pink—pastels in mourning—and it has a sliding glass door leading to a balcony. Music that suggests package-tour, south-of-the-border fun is playing. You suspect that zaniness, sitcom style, will soon ensue. (Sending sitcom characters on vacation has a long history, going back to Lucy and Ricky; these days, characters in sitcoms don't take time off from their jobs—they're too worried about being fired.) The familiar tropes are there: lost luggage, an agonizing sunburn, a stab at a romantic fling. But Ackermann puts these devices to new, and sometimes surreal, uses, giving them actual meaning and emotional depth. "The Batting Cage" has qualities not to be found in sitcoms: strangeness, surprise, and, most notably, a good deal of silence.

For much of the play, the only characters we see are two sisters, Julianna (Veanne Cox) and Wilson (Babo Harrison), who have come to St. Augustine not on vacation but on a mission: to scatter the ashes of their sister, Morgan, who had diabetes and died two years earlier, when "finally, her heart just quit." The sisters are as unalike as they can be. Julianna, a prim divorcée who lives on Boston's north shore, is high-strung, talkative, self-absorbed, and given to dramatic fits of dissatisfaction: coming back from a souvenir-hunting expedition, she says, "I saw myself in a full-length mirror in Woolworth's, I said who is that person, that Sears, Roebuck catalogue woman from Akron, Ohio, some luncheon hostess at an Olive Garden chain restaurant?" Wilson, the younger sister, is



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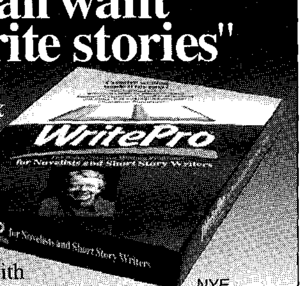

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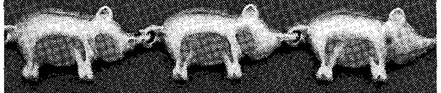

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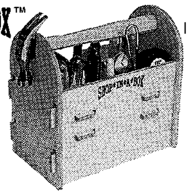

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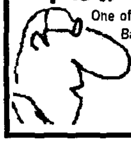

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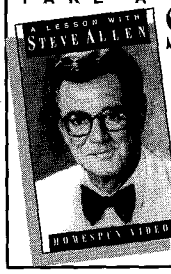
dressed in baggy shorts, a baggy blue polo shirt, brown socks, and black shoes. She slumps, and wears government-issue glasses. When she first arrives in the room, she doesn't go over to the door for a look at the view—she takes a screwdriver out of her knapsack, removes the cover plate from the light switch, and replaces it with a dimmer. Then she flops, face down, onto one of the beds. She strikes you right away as an odd, interesting mixture of control and collapse, and you wonder what her story is.

I saw "The Batting Cage" when it was given its first production a year and a half ago, at the annual Humana Festival of New American Plays, in Louisville, and it took root in my mind in a way that none of the festival's eleven other productions that year did (including Naomi Wallace's "One Flea Spare," a political play of sledgehammer-like subtlety, which came to the Public earlier this year). Cox, Harrison, and Justin Hagan, who plays a hotel waiter, were in the Louisville cast, under the excellent direction of Lisa Peterson, who is also in charge of the Vineyard production. Cox is terrific, delivering sometimes hilarious blizzards of words in an attempt to bury her own loneliness and to needle her sister into responsiveness. Harrison's Wilson, though, is the heart of the play, and is where its unusual silence resides. Ackermann has a good ear for the way people talk, and a good ear for the way they don't talk. Julianna never stops yammering—it's from her that we learn that Morgan and Wilson were fraternal twins—and when she asks Wilson why she's brought ten identical blue polo shirts Wilson says only, "I like this shirt." On the phone to their mother, Julianna says of Wilson, "I can't tell if she's still grieving or just being herself." She's doing both, and in her own way, and without explanation. You can't pigeonhole Wilson: she's not conventionally "feminine," but she's not "unfeminine," either. It's rare to see a writer so willing not to define a character, especially a female character. Harrison brings an understated force and emotionality to this role; whether she's sprawling on the bed or single-mindedly preparing for a mysterious errand, she makes Wilson riveting, a full human being and not just an eccentric. Imagine—a plain woman who occupies space in the world without apology, who acts as though she had a right to be there. What a concept. ♦



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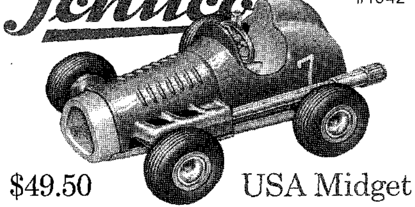

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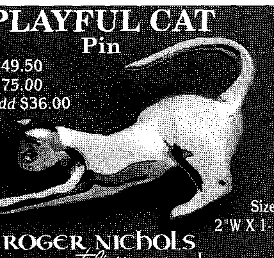

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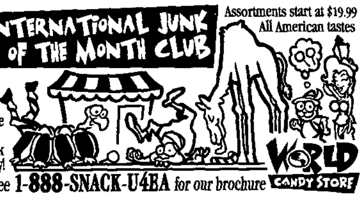

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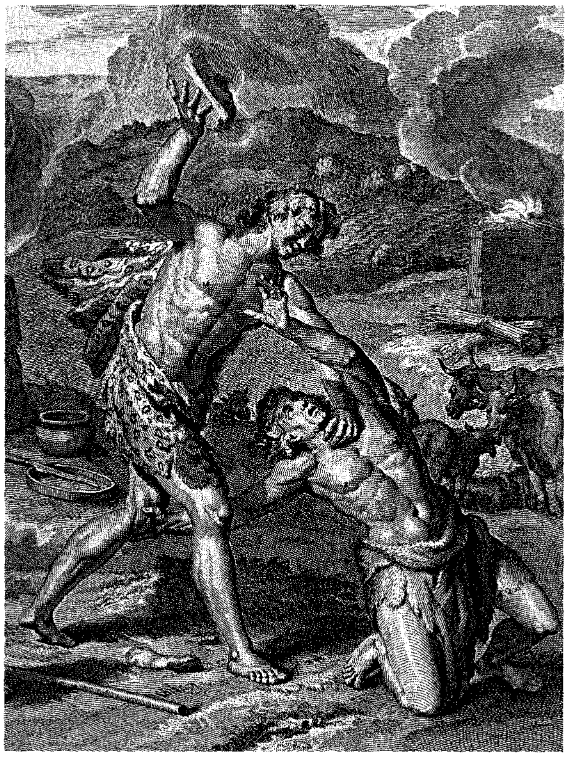
The Good Book's dark side.

BY LAWRENCE WESCHLER



Has Biblical fratricide sanctioned historical genocide?

CULVER PICTURES

To hear Regina Schwartz tell it, the whole thing began with a first-year student's impertinent interruption in the middle of one of her Biblical-studies classes. While Schwartz, an English professor at Northwestern University and the director of the Chicago Institute of Religion, Ethics, and Violence, was talking about how "deeply inspiring" the Exodus liberation story was—especially compared with other foundation narratives, so often strewn with plunder and conquest—this kid had cut her short with a mildly self-evident query: "*What about the Canaanites?*" As she writes in the preface to "The Curse of Cain" (Chicago; $22.95), this question ended up taking her years and an entire book to try to answer.

The result is artfully rendered, endlessly provocative, and at times wildly exasperating. Schwartz subtitles her study "The Violent Legacy of Monotheism," but what she's really noodling around with are the *genocidal* implications of monotheism. Although her focus is on the Hebrew Bible, Schwartz's real subject is the genocidal tendencies embedded in all of that Book's spiritual progeny—Christianity and Islam as well as Judaism. What they share is the Biblical propensity to conceive of history as One God expressing himself in the world through his choice of One People—a people who get defined against inferior others, with predictably dire consequences.

Schwartz herself was reared in a Reform Jewish tradition that cast the Jews' chosenness in ethical terms—being "chosen" didn't mean you were better, just that you answered to higher ethical expectations—but her student's question about the Canaanites crystallized a lingering unease she'd felt. For "where the Bible both inspired and seemed to fail me," Schwartz recalls, was precisely on this matter of ethics, where "a moving accountability for the widow, the orphan and the poor and commitment to liberation from oppression is joined to obliterating the Canaanites." What she came to realize is that whenever the narrative became concerned with defining Israelite identity—distinguishing insider and outsider—such casual brutality seemed to be the order of the day.

Whereupon she began noticing all sorts of odd things about the Bible. For starters, the Exodus story itself. Let's see if we have this straight: Because the Jews

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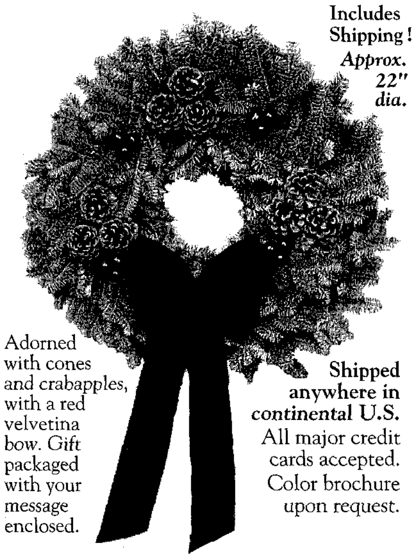

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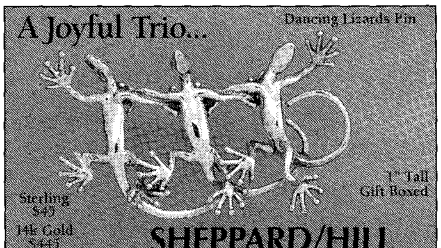

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were persecuted by Pharaoh in Egypt, they have the right to take over somebody else's land more than a hundred miles to the east? Why didn't God smite Pharaoh and give the Jews a piece of *his* land? Sluicing beneath the surface of Schwartz's argument, of course, are implications for Zionism itself: Given that the Nazi genocide established the necessity for a Jewish homeland, she seems to suggest, why did it have to be in Palestine rather than, say, Bavaria or the Ruhr Valley? Because of something Pharaoh did more than three thousand years ago?

"The ancient Israelites never lay claim to the land as natives," Schwartz notes. "On the contrary, their story tells of a people who originate elsewhere." And this, Schwartz points out, is a pattern that recurs repeatedly in Bible-sanctioned history. The fact that the Puritans are persecuted in England gives them leave to venture out across the waters and wrest land from the Indians. The Boers decamp from Holland en route to their divinely ordained destiny in Cape Town. And so forth.

I recently encountered a variation on this pattern while reporting in the Bosnian town of Banja Luka, whose majority Muslim community was almost entirely "cleansed" by its Serb neighbors during the recent war. As I was standing alongside a rubble-strewn parking lot on the site of what had until recently been one of the most splendid ancient mosques west of Istanbul, I asked a passing Serb student by what justification this and all the town's other mosques had been levelled. "Because of what the Ustasha did to us during the Second World War—they levelled our Orthodox churches," he replied without the slightest hesitation. Only, the Ustasha were *Croats*. I somehow felt transported into a Three Stooges movie: Moe wallops Larry, who then feels entirely justified in turning around and smashing Curly. Reading Schwartz will remind you that Larry's gambit has an ancient lineage.

Across chapters on covenants, land, kinship, nation, and memory, Schwartz lays siege to the very notion of a chosen identity. Along the way, she offers fascinatingly original readings of all sorts of tales: the expulsion from the Garden, God's acceptance of Abel's offering over Cain's (and Cain's murderous revenge), Jacob's wily theft of the blessing his blind father had intended for Esau, and on through Joseph's exile, Moses's redemption, and beyond. Throughout these discussions she keeps returning to contrasting paradigms of "scarcity" and "plenitude." Why, she asks, as impertinently as any first-year student, does God have to choose either Abel's or Cain's offering—why not both? Why does Isaac have only one blessing to offer? Why must the land of Canaan belong only to the Jews or else only to the Canaanites? Why this strangulating scarcity everywhere?

All this leads, in turn, to one of her book's central exasperations. Schwartz writes as if scarcity were merely some sort of metaphor. But the theme may well have reflected an actual scarcity of resources in ancient Palestine—a condition in which murderous competition would naturally arise. For that matter, is it really clear that monotheism instigated genocidal proclivities, instead of functioning as a sort of post-hoc justification for them? It's worth noting that murder has found many other travelling companions besides monotheism. Pagans—whether Homeric Greeks or Vedic Aryans—weren't exactly slouches at constructing transcendental rationales for their earthly depredations. When it comes to genocidal mayhem, surely the Iliad and the Mahabharata can match Exodus blow for blow.

Just when you're about to toss Schwartz's book away in utter frustration, however, it takes a startlingly suggestive turn. For rather than building toward a critique of the Bible itself, Schwartz offers us a critique of the ways we read the Bible: she insists that those readings themselves suffer from a sort of conceptual scarcity, scanting the plenitude of alternative readings offered by Scripture. In contrast to such images of scarcity as Cain's spurned offering and Isaac's misplaced blessing, Schwartz cites the manna raining from Heaven in Exodus's wilderness as a defining instance of abundance, with plenty for everyone. And though Israel's chosen nationhood is represented as a gift from God, Schwartz notes that elsewhere the story of Babel casts the dispersal of mankind into separate nations as a punishment and a terrible affliction—anything but a gift.

She even questions the centrality of the Hebrews' attainment of a Promised Land by pointing out recurrent countermotifs—such as the nostalgic celebration of the prior life of nomadism. "The prophets," she writes, "imagine the wilderness, not as a place of exile, but as an idealized place of innocence before the corruptions of the territorial state and a place to return to heal those corruptions." For them, she notes, "possession of the land and idolatry go hand in hand."

Surveying the way a multifarious text has been parched of meaning by successively reductive readings, Schwartz pays particular attention to two traditions of Biblical interpretation. The first she associates with the Protestant Reformation, in a Europe that was "on the road to carving itself into new peoples, new nationalisms"—and horrendously violent and self-righteous ones at that. The second tradition she associates with the rise of modern Biblical studies in nineteenth-century Germany, when scholars were projecting their own emerging nationalist obsessions back onto the Biblical text. "Could it really be coincidence," Schwartz wonders, "that Biblical higher criticism and the ideology of radical modern nationalism were born in the same period in the same place?"

It is in the face of this progressively constricting history of misreading that Schwartz, on her last page, proposes a "re-vision" in which "an alternative Bible... subverts the dominant vision of violence and scarcity with an ideal of plenitude and its corollary ethical imperative of generosity. It would be a Bible embracing multiplicity instead of monotheism." And she goes on, "When I began this project, I anticipated concluding with the injunction from Augustine to 'close the Book.' For him, faith had superseded it; for me, its ancient agonistic values are far too dangerous to continue authorizing. But I have come to understand that same urge in a new light. The old 'monotheistic' Book must be closed so that new books may be fruitful and multiply. After all, that was the first commandment."

Still, you have to wonder. Just as German romantic-nationalist scholars construed a romantic-nationalist Bible, Schwartz, the postmodern American critic, has projected (surprise!) the perfect postmodernist Bible, with more simultaneous narratives unspooling than at any shopping-mall cineplex. Yet for all the richness and agility of her interpretations, are they any less timebound than their predecessors? And what is to keep the proliferation of these "provisional" new readings—endlessly revisable, never conclusive—from falling into indiscriminate relativism? More to the point, you might wonder how something can be both provisional and sacred—except, of course, that that's exactly what life is. ♦

(Advt.)

It is sad indeed that violence, hatred, fear and murder exist in our world. The same dark elements, however, can enliven contemporary fiction, especially when they are molded with skill and imagination into an intriguing literary puzzle. ***BLOOD AT THE ROOT*** is the latest mystery by **Peter Robinson** featuring British Detective Inspector Alan Banks—the author's first since his award-winning *Innocent Graves*. Here Banks investigates the slaying of a local neo-Nazi youth, a murder that could have fierce and widespread repercussions throughout a small urban community. Nothing in Robinson's books is ever simple or pat; victim and victimizer, crime and punishment, wrong and right, all are painted in shades of industrial Yorkshire gray—which, in this author's hands, turns out to be quite a versatile color.

PETER ROBINSON BLOOD AT THE ROOT AN INSPECTOR BANKS MYSTERY

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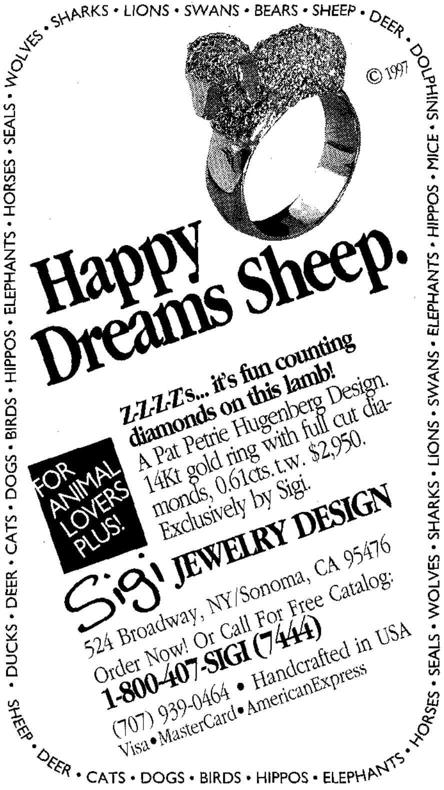
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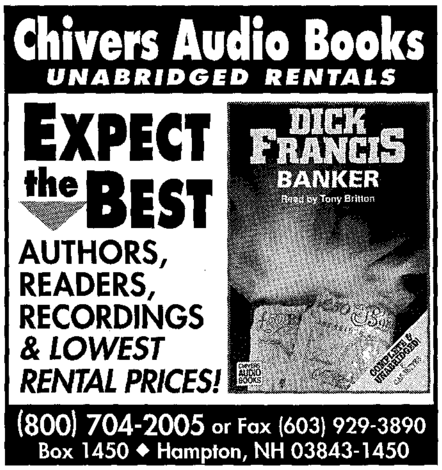
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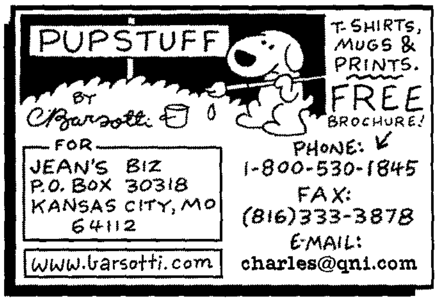
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MUSICAL EVENTS

NEW BLOOD

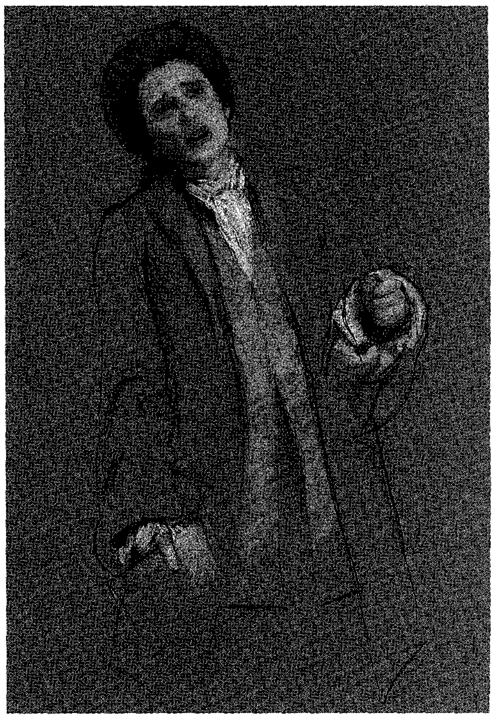
Boogie nights at City Opera and the Brooklyn Philharmonic.

BY ALEX ROSS

It's a fight to keep even one opera house or one orchestra alive and thriving in a modern urban culture. To expect two or more such institutions to prosper side by side is no doubt foolish. Still, in a few great cities a kind of nineteenth-century wealth of music remains. London, with two big opera houses and five orchestras, is the city with the most music per square mile; despite the financial chaos currently enveloping the Royal Opera House—or perhaps precisely because that chaos makes the evening news—London remains the unofficial music capital. One would expect New York to be facing similar crises. To the perplexity of the pessimists who overrun classical music, it is not. New York City Opera, the second opera house, is having a renaissance; among smaller-scale rivals to the New York Philharmonic, the Brooklyn Philharmonic has become a serious force. Recently in New York, you could have heard, on successive nights, Lorraine Hunt's transfixing lead performance in City Opera's "Xerxes" and the Brooklyn's no less transfixing performance of a symphony by Sofia Gubaidulina. A musical community that can offer such events as "alternatives" is not as dead as some like to think it is.

City Opera has become so swiftly chic that it's hard to remember the sense of dull struggle that hung over it just two years ago. Founded in 1944 as a sort of people's opera, at the urging of Mayor LaGuardia, it has gone through various repertoires—a spell of American opera, much bel canto with Beverly Sills, a digression into operetta. Most recently, it was led by the brave, erratic, and now deceased Christopher Keene. Keene's principal achievement was to import such neglected modernist monuments as Bernd Alois Zimmermann's "Die Soldaten," Busoni's "Doktor Faust," and Hindemith's "Mathis der Maler." My first trip to the house was for Zimmermann's masterpiece: as the orchestra launched into his apocalyptic revision of Brahms's First, I had a fantasy of a new kind of opera house in which the twentieth century would be the main event. It soon became apparent, however, that Keene didn't please the people enough. The company tried to recoup with cut-rate productions of Verdi and Puccini. It acquired a wobbly profile. On off nights, the tedium could be crushing.

City Opera's new leaders—Paul Kellogg, the general director, who is also


STEPHEN JOHNSON

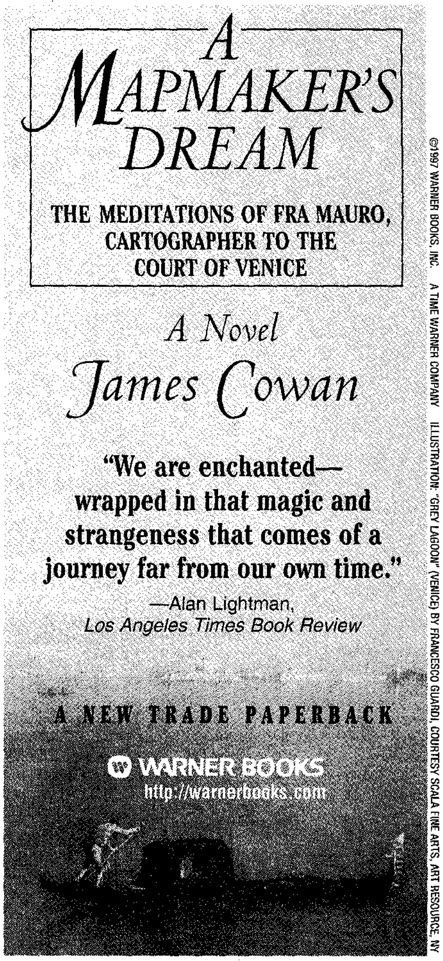
Hunt in "Xerxes": A transfixing performance that summoned comparisons to Callas.

the artistic head of the summertime Glimmerglass Opera, and George Manahan, the music director—are shrewder in their approach. Middle European cataclysms have gone by the boards, and the programming has moved trendily toward the pre-Mozartian. Gluck's "Iphigénie en Tauride" and Handel's "Xerxes" were big draws this fall. "Iphigénie," directed by the compulsively revisionist Francesca Zambello, attracted attention for what promised to be a daring homoerotic conception of the relationship between Oreste and Pylade. The homoeroticism consisted of two or three sidelong glances between guys in loincloths. The set—some kind of modernist dungeon—avoided the peculiarly repulsive color schemes in which Zambello has sometimes indulged, but the staging gave no clue to where and when the action was taking place, no rationale for Scythian choruses and other inconvenient conventions. Christine Goerke, a big-voiced soprano with considerable Mozart and Verdi potential, provided the main musical interest.

"Xerxes" was a triumph. Stephen Wadsworth, the director, has successfully transplanted the piece from ancient Persia to eighteenth-century England; the simple, static courtyard design generously allows itself to be upstaged by the words and the music and by the singers' way with both. His ingenious translation of the Italian text updates the language without undercutting the bucolic innocence of this marital comedy. Some touches are positively Audenesque—for example, the couplet "We must suffer with our lot / Heaven knows, and we do not." As a director, Wadsworth finds ways to accommodate modern listeners' impatience with Handelian arias, our "Not again!" response to da capo form: he has the characters hector one another, wheel back for a last jibe or plea. The cast was excellent all around, with David Daniels and Amy Burton proving especially fine, but Lorraine Hunt dominated. I heard a couple of people utter the name "Callas" on the way out, and they were exaggerating only a bit. A complete singer-actress, Hunt unleashed a large, bright mezzo tone, invested every ornament with feeling, pulled back into silvery sweetness, and gave a characterization that ranged from the farcical to the disconcertingly fierce (as in the aria "You are spiteful, perverse, and insulting," formerly "Se bramate d'amar"). She was also, to an uncanny degree, masculine; she sounded, to Daniels's disadvantage, like the greatest countertenor who ever lived.

If City Opera can persuade the self-willed Hunt to appear with any regularity, a splendid era is ahead. But the company has another charismatic singer-actress on its roster: Lauren Flanigan, who last year sang a riveting Governess in Britten's "Turn of the Screw" and this year, in Verdi's "Macbeth," turned in a provocative Lady Macbeth—exuberant, extroverted, a kind of demented party girl. Flanigan's acting, like Hunt's, is free of stock gestures and employs much naturalistic detail. She has ferocious concentration. (Unfortunately, John Conklin's geometrical, steely sets for "Macbeth" provided a poor context for her ideas.) There are small flaws in her basically strong soprano—her voice can turn a little edgy toward the top, and it sometimes threatens to billow out of control—but she has a distinctive sound, and she is often more interesting to hear and watch than a certified global star like Angela Gheorghiu or Cecilia Bartoli. Peter Davis, in his authoritative new book "The American Opera Singer," attacks a modern vocal style that is marked by a "chameleonlike ability to sing anything efficiently and plausibly." City Opera, by cultivating thinking divas like Flanigan, Hunt, and Goerke, seems intent on finding exceptions to that rule.

The new regime's intentions with regard to contemporary and twentieth-century opera are so far unclear. Last week, the company presented Tan Dun's almost brand-new "Marco Polo," and it was a perplexing fizzle. It must have seemed a canny choice on paper: Tan is the most visible, prolific, and ambitious of the younger Chinese-born composers who are suddenly everywhere on the contemporary scene. "Marco Polo" is a ritualistic, dreamlike piece in which the title character becomes an abstraction acted out by two singers. Paul Griffiths's libretto avoids specific action in favor of poetic generalities, and Martha Clarke's production consisted almost entirely of luxurious choreography and costume. Although Griffiths and Clarke may be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blamed for the lifelessness of the evening, the buck must stop with the composer. Tan's sound world is beguiling at first: the orchestra has a kind of violent shimmer to it. But his mannerisms have a way of turning relentless—the ear can take only so many foghorn blasts in the brass—and his vocal lines wander strangely from Peking Opera filigree to late-Romantic bombast. A long quotation from "Das Lied von der Erde" is not only presumptuous but musically absurd. Both the opera itself and the decision to stage it seem the result of calculation rather than of conviction. In approaching the music of our century, the new City Opera remains cautious.

CITY OPERA is shrewd; the Brooklyn Philharmonic is brazen. Since the nineteen-seventies, under the leadership of Lukas Foss and then Dennis Russell Davies, the orchestra has favored the new and the unfamiliar. When Joseph Horowitz became its executive director, in 1993, it more or less went off the grid of American orchestral culture. Horowitz is best known as the author of the book "Understanding Toscanini," in which he lambasted the uniform, fifty-masterpieces style of programming common since Toscanini's heyday. In Brooklyn, the subscription-series template—overture, concerto, symphony—has been thrown away. Programs have become miniature weekend festivals; often, an afternoon chamber concert takes the weekend's theme further. Programs on the "Russian" Stravinsky and American Transcendentalists from Charles Ives to John Adams have been among the B.P.O.'s notable offerings in recent years. Realizing that it's not enough for an orchestra to have nifty ideas, the B.P.O. took a leap forward last season when it hired as its music director Robert Spano, a brilliant young American maestro who has a talent for stripping away routine.

A program on Halloween weekend, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, was among the bravest and best ventures of Spano and Horowitz's tenure. Gubaidulina's "Stimmen . . . Verstummen," a symphony in twelve movements, received its New York première—indeed, only its second American performance. Spano also led Claude Vivier's "Zipangu," a grungy string threnody by a young Canadian who died of stab wounds in 1983, and the Adagio from Mahler's Tenth Symphony. The loose title for the weekend was "After Mahler"; the theme, really, was the influence of Mahler on composers from the former Soviet Union, as became clear in an excellently conceived and executed chamber-vocal concert of Shostakovich, Schnittke, and Silvestrov. Gubaidulina herself travelled from Hamburg to participate in a panel discussion. Such heavily contemporary fare is not an easy sell; the B.P.O. is on surer ground when it gives programs an ethnic spin (a flamenco weekend last season, a Hungarian program later this season). Still, the audience was vast by contemporary-music standards, and it listened with a quiet concentration that the music needed.

The orchestra gave a bold, committed reading of the Mahler, but it was the Gubaidulina that became the centerpiece of the evening. Spano had obviously rehearsed the piece with an eye not only to the musical argument but also to the theatrical effect: visceral contrasts of plain D-major tonality and extreme dissonance; a kind of ricocheting exchange among gongs at different stations on the stage; an offstage trio of strings. At the eerily silent climax, the conductor is asked to perform a minute-long "cadenza" of static, hieratic gestures. The idea may seem comical on paper, but it had a crazily religious intensity in the hall. It symbolized a break in the music, a stillness at the center of a dissonant storm, and it cleared the air for sonic wonders in the closing minutes—huge Brucknerian chords in the brass, a distant wash of bells, and, at the very end, a gently rotating three-note figure in the harps, like a music box winding down. Afterward, there was a long roar of applause, and the surprised, grateful look on the composer's face was touching to behold.

This was an important performance of an important work. Spano is showing craftsmanship, showmanship, and intelligence in equal measure. His tenure in Brooklyn reminds one of Leonard Bernstein's pathbreaking concerts with the New York City Symphony in the nineteen-forties, before he took on the more glamorous challenge of the New York Philharmonic. But the B.P.O. need not be a stepping stone to something greater. It could become something great in itself. ♦

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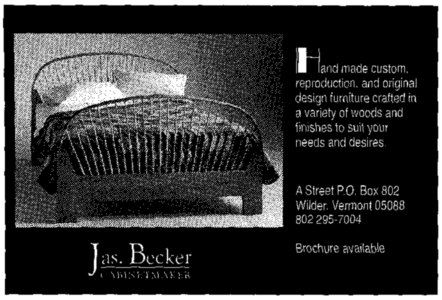
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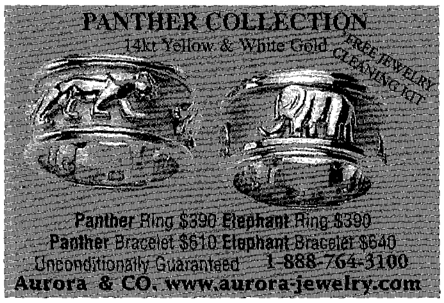
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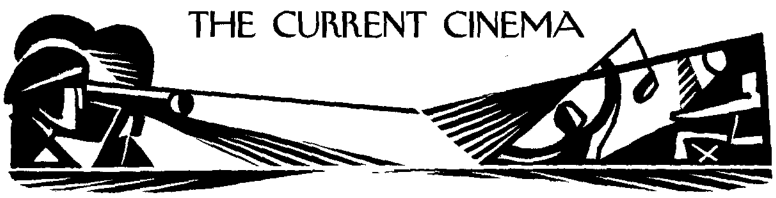


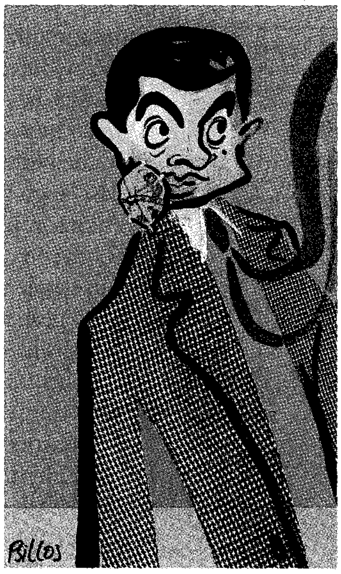
THE CURRENT CINEMA

NOT JUST CHILD'S PLAY

The subversive joy of "Bean," and "The Sweet Hereafter."

BY DAPHNE MERKIN

I HAVE a more active Inner Child than most people I know, but I hate having to watch children's movies. The old-fashioned uplifting kind, with their mawkish scenarios of human goodness, leave me gasping for air, while those born of the contemporary wisdom that there is no age too tender to deal with complex social issues make me anxious on behalf of the young. So it was with some sense of dread that I set off—together with a small demographic sampling in the form of my eight-year-old daughter and her best friend—to see "Bean," based on the popular British TV series featuring the screwball character. The popcorn and the sodas were divvied up, the lights went down, and I prepared to pass two restless hours in the company of someone who I supposed must be a daffier version of Mister Rogers. But only seconds into the film I found myself smiling at the sight of Bean (Rowan Atkinson) performing his daily ablutions, busily shaving his forehead, tongue, and nose. The smile stretched into a grin as Bean proceeded to deconstruct his morning cup of coffee into its component parts and then reassemble it as a new breed of mouthwash—first quaffing the instant coffee, then the sugar, then the milk, and finally gargling the whole mess down by pouring hot water from a kettle directly into his throat. Less than ten minutes later, I was actually chuckling as the pompous board members of London's National Gallery, where Bean works as a lowly guard, jockeyed for the choice job of accompanying the portrait of Whistler's mother to America. I checked out the two little girls at my side to see if I was getting carried away in grand isolation, but they, too, were lost in giggles.



Rowan Atkinson: an elastic, ear-wiggling comic gift.

DEMETRIOS PSILLOS

Soon Bean, a nuisance to be got rid of by whatever means necessary, is on his way to Los Angeles, where the Grierson Gallery has purchased the Whistler for fifty million dollars, and he is to preside over the painting's unveiling. The person who has been pulling for him—or, at least, for a renowned scholar to dignify the ceremonies, instead of a mediagenic figure such as Jon Bon Jovi—is the gallery's curator, David Langley (Peter MacNicol). Langley has also coaxed his family into accepting the famous expert on American Impressionism as a house guest, even though his skeptical daughter Jennifer points out that "all Englishmen are ugly—I just look at Prince Charles and weep." When the Langleys finally meet Bean—snorts, twitches, wiggling ears, and all—David's wife, Alison (Pamela Reed), is quick to weigh in with her verdict: "There are Martians who have been exiled from Mars for looking weird who look less weird than this guy." The sweet-natured David keeps trying to convince himself that Bean's eccentricities are just a manifestation of his ivory-tower genius, but pretty soon the evidence—including Bean's preference for going to an amusement park rather than doing the art rounds, and his habit of drying his (sole?) pair of underpants in the oven—is incontrovertible.

Things rapidly go from desperate to worse: Alison moves to her mother's with

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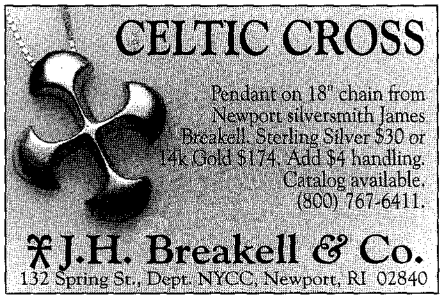
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the kids after David refuses to throw the visitor out, and Bean, left alone with the Whistler, promptly sneezes on it. Don't ask how he goes about trying to clean up *that* blunder, but once he gets done with the painter's mom she doesn't look much like her old, grim-faced self. And yet just when you think that any guy who sticks peanuts up his nostril and blows them at the TV in order to change the channel shouldn't be let out of the zoo, Bean turns out to be not only ingeniously destructive but ingeniously clever. Suffice it to say that, after meditating on the damage he has done to David's professional and personal life, he comes up with a brilliant art-restoration plan involving chewing gum, egg yolks, nail polish, and the miracle of gift-shop posters. In a world where a know-nothing museum benefactor (an inspired cameo by Burt Reynolds) proudly acknowledges that he can't tell the difference "between a Picasso and a car crash," Bean proves to be the perfect poseur—one who keeps the last laugh to himself. Well, almost.

Atkinson has a remarkably elastic face and body; he's fascinating to watch, if only because you never know how far he's going to push a specific gag. When he isn't waddling like a penguin or braying like a donkey, his comic gift does appear to have human influences—touches of Buster Keaton, Jacques Tati, Dick Van Dyke, and Pee-wee Herman. There may be one bathroom joke too many for non-Brits, but the conceit at the heart of this witty script—that the bowings and scrapings of academic and social prestige are nothing more than the child's play of adults—should appeal to grownups everywhere. As for the young, who instinctively understand the subversive value of mischief, Mr. Bean is so unerringly naughty that he's heroic. Which only goes to show that kids know the darnedest things.

IMAGES of children haunt "The Sweet Hereafter," Atom Egoyan's exquisitely sober new movie, based on the novel by Russell Banks. "We've all lost our children," declares Mitchell Stephens (Ian Holm), a big-city negligence lawyer who is pursuing justice on behalf of the small rural community of Sam Dent, British Columbia, in the wake of a school-bus accident. "They're dead to us. . . . They wander, comatose, through shopping malls. . . . They're gone." Stephens is trying to persuade himself and Billy Ansell (Bruce Greenwood), a wary mechanic who has lost twins in the accident, that the class-action suit he's putting together has nothing to do with exploitation and financial reward and everything to do with avenging the community's sense of grief. His rage over the fate of his own daughter (Caerthan Banks), who has disappeared into drugs and AIDS, and who keeps making collect calls to his cellular phone asking for money, lends credibility to his case, but it also blurs the line between his genuine sorrow and his shrewd milking of other people's sorrow. "Judges like adopted Indian boys," he cheerfully observes, upon hearing a description of one of the children who died in the accident.

Against a snowy, mountainous backdrop, the life of this blue-collar community is played out in small houses and failed marriages, in run-down motels named Bide-a-Wile and bars called the Spread Eagle. Egoyan has left the gimmicky stuff he did in "Exotica" behind him and has written one of the best adaptations of a book in years. Holm, with his hooded eyes and smoldering intelligence, holds the screen like a volcanic force. The other actors, many of whom have worked with Egoyan before, are so good that you wonder why we don't see them more often, particularly Gabrielle Rose, who plays the bus driver, and Alberta Watson, who was the incestuous mother in "Spanking the Monkey" and is equally compelling here as the lachrymose erotic interest. Sarah Polley looks like a younger, more spiritual sister of Uma Thurman, and is extraordinary as a paralyzed survivor of the crash who, in this undidactic study of the survival instinct, tells a lie that will keep the town together. ♦

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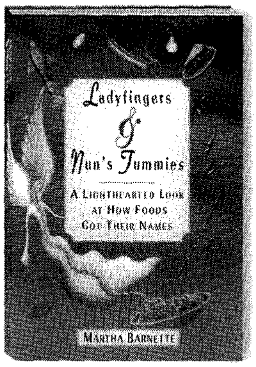
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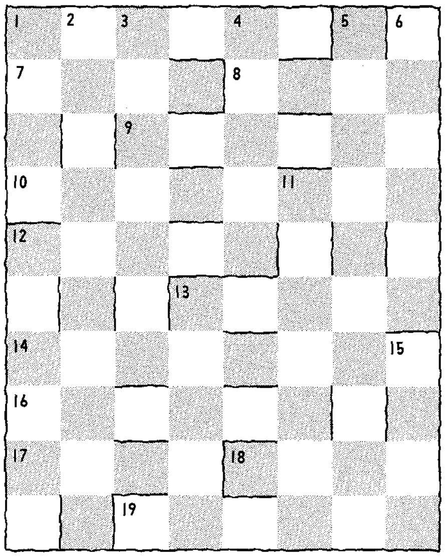

ACROSS

1 Jeer rudely in front of court outcast (6)
7 Farm team put five more into oven? (4)
8 Concerned with most of Ernie's back (2,2)
9 Lunatic did in sitter behind closed doors (6)
10 Dishonor carried by F.B.I. agent grew bigger and bigger (8)
12 Head of company on screen (5)
13 Vitality or taste (5)
14 They're there already, holding light (8)
16 Sticker: "Container holds fresh pie" (6)
17 Naysayer employed by Banting (4)
18 Reportedly study clarinet piece (4)
19 Fancy marble, dull base (6)

DOWN

1 Demonstration after the first summit (4)
2 Taking advantage of Arafat's group in leaving (10)
3 Have O.J. free before end of month—God (7)
4 Cried, tossed apple drink (5)
5 Mooch bananas for dear Lee (10)
6 Provide splitter (6)
11 I write in red, not green (7)
12 Minos, for one, spilled nectar (6)
13 Rotten pea is brown (5)
15 Boy and Spanish woman (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 22 appears on page 119. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036.

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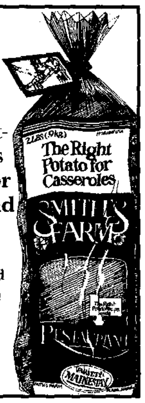

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

SWAT RADIO

BY PAUL FLEISCHMAN

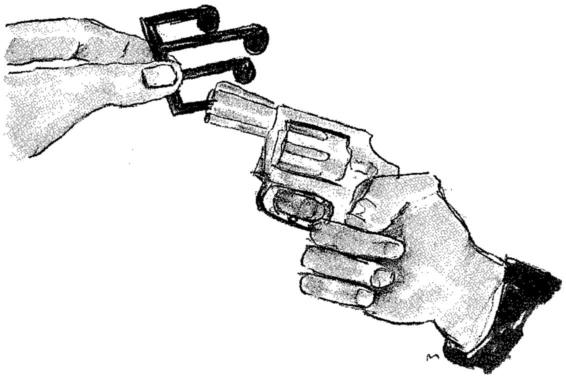
Troopers began tearing down the floodlights and putting away the bullhorns they had used, unsuccessfully, to try to talk with Allen every 15 minutes since she holed up in her home. They also began packing up the Barry Manilow tunes and classical music family members hoped would calm her enough to surrender. —*Associated Press.*

I'D just flown in from a prison riot in Texas—mostly rap and blues on that job, plus a little Flaco Jiménez. Sheila starts in again about all the travelling, we get into it *fortissimo*, she packs up and walks out. "Stormy Monday Blues" starts playing in my head, and right then the call comes in. Local standoff, heavily armed male holding ex and kids hostage, won't negotiate. Zip for audio profile, meaning I have to schlepp everything—Yoruba work chants, Bartók, the Sex Pistols.

I jump in the van, tear across town, and get there at around five. A ranch-style in the suburbs. They've got a sound board set up across the street. I slam in a cassette of "We Can Work It Out," an easy-listening version. It's kind of my theme song. Nonverbal. Nonthreatening. It buys me a little time. I unpack. They tell me the guy's Caucasian, in his forties. I need more. Then I get it: he shoots out one of my speakers. I think, He's a purist. He hates covers of Beatles tunes. The song reminds him of seventh grade. Or of the Beatles' breakup. It's a statement, but of what? I need something soothing and broad-spectrum, pronto. I reach for Mozart, the adagio from the K. 467 Piano Concerto. I put my hand on Perahia, then consider the purist angle and go with the scratchy Schnabel LP.

No more gunfire. It's time to build trust. He's been dumped by his wife, he can't deal with it. I've been there. Fact: women make you crazy. I take a chance—B. B. King's "She's a Mean Woman." Then Rex Harrison, "I'm an Ordinary Man" from "My Fair Lady." "She'll redecorate your home from the cellar to the dome. . . ." You can feel the tension ease. I'm on his side. I play a string of slow dances, then Sonny and Cher's "I Got You Babe." I'm reminding him of all the good times they had. I realize I'm thinking about Sheila.

No movement. Then it hits me—his kids are in there. They're my lever. Suddenly, I'm loading CDs like an artilleryman. Raffi, Big Bird, the theme from "The Flintstones." I pound him with the innocence of childhood. Three hours, without commercial interruption. At 9 P.M., the front door opens and three kids walk out in a line. I can't resist. I pop in the entrance of the toreadors from "Carmen."



I go to work on springing the wife. "Release Me" (Humperdinck) every fifteen minutes. After a few hours, the cops are singing along with the chorus. Finally, I get a printout on the guy. He's from Georgia. Father's a Baptist minister. I take off the gloves. Solid-gold gospel guilt time: "Get Down on Your Knees and Pray," by the Kentucky Colonels. In verse two, the wife walks.

Getting him to come out—that'll be tougher. He's threatening to blow himself up. I back off from the gospel and clean the slate with "Born Free." Nature, no Jehovah or sin. Then the whole "Surfin' Safari" boxed set, two hours of judgment-free listening. By now it's 2 A.M. and my eyes are crossing. I wonder where Sheila is sleeping. I slip in Dionne Warwick, "I Say a Little Prayer," then split the cellophane on a new Hawaiian-hula compilation I'd been wanting to hear and settle down with the liner notes.

The next thing I know, someone's shaking me, and I wake up to sunshine and dead air. Still no progress. I've had it with this guy. I start messing with his head. I taunt him with "In My Room." Then Howlin' Wolf's "Back Door Man"—make him wonder if we're sneaking in. I try driving him out with Penderecki and "Rap's Raunchiest Hits," played simultaneously. No luck. Then I get an idea. I'll induce hypnosis.

I grab Philip Glass's "Koyaanisqatsi" soundtrack and give him a dose the F.D.A. wouldn't recommend. The third time through, I feel him coming under my power. That's when I cue up "Pomp and Circumstance." Subliminally, he'll see people marching. I'm willing him out the door. Tchaikovsky, "Marche Slave." A Sousa sampler. I look over his sheet. His last name's McCracken. Scottish descent? I'm on it in a flash: "Highland Marches for Pipe and Drum." I slap it on the turntable. The bagpipes blare like a herd of elephants. Must have hit the ancestral mark. He strolls out like a sleepwalker—Side A, second cut.

I wrap with "We Can Work It Out." I dedicate it to Sheila. I decide I'll make her a tape, and I start packing. I'm already thinking about a playlist. ♦

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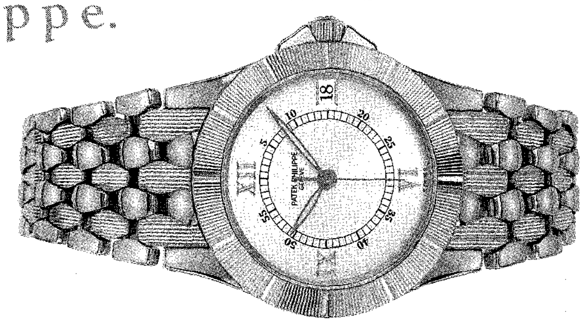

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